# Border States

*Journal of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association*

*Number 13 • 2001*

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*Number 13* — *2001*

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*Border States*, the offical journal of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association, is published biennially. Although preference is given to work previously presented as papers at the organization's annual meetings, the editors welcome the submission of manuscripts dealing with all aspects of the Kentucky-Tennessee region. Completed manuscripts of no more than fifteen double-spaced pages—including notes, works cited, or bibliography—should be submitted in duplicate. Send manuscripts to: Ellen Donovan (English) or Mary Hoffschwelle (History) in care of Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132, by September 1, 2002. Manuscripts will be read by at least two members of the editorial board and, barring unforeseen problems, authors will receive notice of the board's decision in six to eight weeks.

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## Editors' Notes

The Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association welcomes the new millenium with its thirteenth volume. Papers presented at the association's 1999 and 2000 conferences, held at the Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, and Fall Creek Falls State Park in Tennessee respectively, provide the core of this issue.

Volume 13 begins with a thought-provoking assessment of the past, present, and future of American Studies from three generations of scholars in our discipline. John C. Cawelti, David E. Magill, Pam Warford, and Amanda M. Wilkerson presented this panel discussion as the association closed the twentieth century at its 2000 meeting. Their commentaries share a common recognition that future American Studies scholarship will be a global endeavor.

Michael Gavin's essay on Tennessee log houses moves readers back to our region's settlement and development by Anglo-Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and provides readers with a useful analytical framework for understanding the architectural legacy of Tennessee's pioneers. Art Wrobel and Ann Beebe shift our focus to Kentucky. Wrobel uses the rich documentary resources left by the Wickliffe family and the African Americans associated with them to explore the complex human relationships within the institution of slavery. In Lizzie Hardin, Ann Beebe finds an assertive young woman who used the conventions of nineteenth-century literature as inspiration for casting herself in a public role as a defender of the Confederacy.

Kay Baker Gaston's essay changes our perspective to literary analysis. She examines the influence of Henry David Thoreau on Emma Bell Miles, whose embrace of the wild led to an unconventional life and enriched her literary and artistic career. Judith J. Hatchett explores how the rereading a text deepens our literary understanding in her analysis of Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. Jack Slay, Jr. argues that Bobbie Ann Mason's characters in *In Country* demonstrate her conviction that late twentieth-century life focused on the present, with little regard or need for the past or future.

We hope that our readers will enjoy this multi-faceted collection about our border states.

Mary S. Hoffschwelle and Ellen Donovan

# American Studies: What and Where To?
# A Panel Discussion on the Nature and Future of American Studies

*Editors' Note: One of the highlights of the 45th Annual Meeting of the Kentucky-Tennessee Chapter of the American Studies Association in April 2000 was a roundtable discussion of the present and future state of American Studies. Panelists John Cawelti, David Magill, Pam Warford, and Amanda Wilkerson kindly agreed to share their remarks with the readers of* Border States. *We are pleased to begin in the new millennium with this lively and thoughtful set of commentaries on our discipline.*

## American Studies: Looking Back on Forty Years and Ahead a Few More

John G. Cawelti
Emeritus, University of Kentucky

During my forty-three years of teaching, American Studies has undergone many changes and has been subject to many different influences. In fact, it has changed so much and so often that I've come to think of it more as a process than a discipline. Back in the 1950s, when I did a graduate program in American Studies at the University of Iowa under Alexander Kern, American Studies reflected a complex and sometimes uneasy balance between two major influences. On one side was the progressive historiography of the American historians whose work grew out of the "Progressive historiography" of the generations of Frederick Jackson Turner and Charles Beard. One of their most influential followers was Henry Steele Commager, whose texts were widely used in introductory American history courses. In terms of literature this approach had produced Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Literature* which, though increasingly criticized, remained one of the foundation texts of American Studies in the late forties and early fifties.

The other side of the balance was the modernist new criticism that grew out of the artistic thinking of high modernists like T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce. In America this approach was particularly influential on the new generation of Southern writers who began in the forties and fifties. John Crowe Ransom was one of the central figures of this group, but the most influential vehicle of the new criticism was a text by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren called *Understanding Poetry* (1938) that transformed the teaching of literature in American colleges.

This combination of approaches led in the 1950s to a recreation of the American canon and a reinterpretation of the major American writers. Works like Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* and the

Spiller, Thorp, Canby et. al. *Literary History of the United States* were models for the kind of reinterpretation of major texts characteristic of this period. Among the central ideas of modernism and the new criticism, the concepts of symbolism and myth played a very important part. The most influential American Studies writers of this time were scholars like Henry Nash Smith who, in *Virgin Land,* used a variety of literary texts to define the dominant American myths.

These developments established a kind of dialectic in American Studies that has continued down to the present day. This dialectic begins when significant changes in American culture lead to new ways of looking at American society and history. During this phase of the dialectic, there is usually a considerable expansion of the texts studied. Among the bodies of writing that have at various times been added to the American canon since the 1950s one would have to include such areas as African-American, Native American and ethnic literatures, popular cultures, and women's writing, for example. In addition to expanding the canon, this opening phase of the process of American Studies also usually brings with it a set of new ideas about how to interpret and use literature in the study of culture and history. Typically, this leads some scholars to feel that literary texts are being mistreated by using them mainly as evidence of social and cultural phenomena, rather than as significant works in their own right. In time this inspires a new redefinition and tightening of the American Studies canon.

American Studies has also expanded to include works such as letters, memoirs, diaries, political speeches, and social reports that are not traditionally considered literature but that often shed more obvious light on social and historical events than the traditional literary canon. We also need to mention here the rise of popular culture studies in the 1960s. This helped bring about a serious erosion of the distinction between highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow that was still current in the 1950s and had played an important role in conceptions of American culture since Van Wyck Brooks used them in his 1915 *America's Coming of Age.* (And Brooks, of course, was strongly influenced by the arguments of Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy.)* Today works once considered popular culture are as canonic as many nineteenth-century masterpieces. Recently, for example, the *Library of American Literature,* a highly respectable series devoted to publishing good editions of canonic American writers, added the detective story writer Raymond Chandler and two volumes devoted to "hard-boiled" crime writers of the 1930s and 1950s.

Since most of popular culture and the literature of letters, memoirs, and speeches is of narrower interest and lesser artistic significance than the canonic works of American literature, the use of literary works primarily as historical and cultural evidence soon begins to raise questions about the overall purpose of American Studies. Is it simply a somewhat broader form of history than the traditional areas of politics, society, economics, war and international relations? Or is it primarily concerned with defining that which is most significant about American culture as expressed in the best that has been thought and said in America, to paraphrase Matthew Arnold?



Ambiguities created by rapidly expanding the "textual body" of American Studies leads to the second phase of the dialectic and a narrowing and reinterpretation of the canon of American Studies. During this phase, some of the texts that were added to the canon during the expansion phase are not given a semi-permanent place in the canon and some of the writings that were once canonic are eliminated from the catalog of major American works. The reinterpretation of texts that accompanies this restructuring of the canon also influences the works already in the canon. The new ideas that have led to the addition of works to the canon become influential in reassessing the meaning and significance of the entire canon. Recently, for example, new concepts of gender and race have led to many new interpretations of classic American writers like Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Whitman etc. Though this process of reinterpretation always takes a different form at each further development of the dialectic, its significance has never been more effectively described than it was by T.S. Eliot in his brilliant 1919 essay on "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole readjusted; and this in conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of [American] literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.

In sum, American Studies follows a sort of dialectic between the contraction and reinterpretation of the cultural canon and the expansion of the canon to the point where the existing order is exploded. During the expansive phase of the process, scholars are more inclined to use texts as evidence for the exploration of new historical and cultural themes than they are to analyze texts as works of art. Typically the turning point of the process comes when more and more scholars begin to feel that the new approaches are getting further and further away from the central cultural and artistic characteristics of the text. At this point the reconfiguration of the canon typically begins.

In the last three decades the process of reinterpreting and reconstructing the canon of American Studies has involved the incorporation of the writing of women, African Americans, and various other ethnic groups (especially Latino and Asian). In addition it has led to the use and assimilation of new analytical methods like deconstructionism, the neo-Freudianism of Lacan and his followers, and the cultural archeology of Foucault among others. These have been exciting if often confusing and frustrating times for scholars in American Studies for as soon as they have encountered one new area of culture or one new analytical theory they have found themselves faced with another. Gradually, however, this plenitude of new materials and approaches has begun to develop a certain kind of structure, centered around such basic new historical and artistic concepts as race and gender. In my view, it is time to begin the reconstruction of the canon of American Studies in the light of these new possibilities. Some of the new books in the area seem to hint at this development with important reinterpretations of major American writers like Faulkner, Hawthorne, Poe, Twain, James, and Melville in the light of new ideas of race and gender. Where once these

writers were dismissed as "dead white males" whose works were distorted by their own racism and sexism, more recent criticism tends to reaffirm their significance by exploring their genuine insights into the tragic dilemmas of American culture.

Thus, the traditional major figures of American literature are now undergoing a more sympathetic and affirmative reinterpretation, and increasingly there will be important new work on those women, African- American, and ethnic writers who have now joined the canon of American Studies—writers like Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, Rudolfo Anaya, Amy Tan—as well as much critical controversy about which of these newer writers has the richness and lasting quality to become the new Melville, Twain, Faulkner, and James.

I should know better than to peer any further into the crystal ball of future American Studies. However, since age does not really confer wisdom, I'll offer my speculations about the new areas into which American Studies is likely to move after the present phase of canon tightening and reinterpretation has reached its apogee. In my view there are three areas of great significance to the future understanding of American culture that have not yet been approached by scholars on a large scale. The first involves a new examination of American's role in global culture, not only in the future, but in the past. In the early stages of American Studies there was a wave of scholarship tracing the influence of German, French, and other European cultures on the development of American culture. Now, however, the Euro-American canvas must expand to a worldwide perspective and the historical significance of the way in which America pioneered the first global culture must be explored. This is a vast undertaking and requires a range of knowledge that no individual scholar will ever be able to amass, yet in many ways, the nature of America's global past and destiny is one of the most important issues facing mankind.

A second area involves the study of the recreation of American regions and the restructuring of regional and ethnic cultures and myths in relationship to their role as a nation in an increasingly global culture. The tendency of the last hundred and fifty years has been toward an increasing standardizing of culture until the traditional regional cultures of New England, the Middle West, the South, and the West have atrophied through cycles of migration and standardization. Yet the human desire to feel part of something more immediate and more tangible than world civilization or even the American nation has led to an increasing re-creation of regional cultures, a process of re-regionalizing and re-ethnicizing that is marked by such things as interest in local history, the success of regional magazines and festivals, and many other such phenomena. In fact, many of the recent transformations of American Studies are directly related to these phenomena.

Finally, the recognition that culture is not solely expressed in literary works will lead American Studies scholars to take more account of the great variety and level of cultural expression through many different media that has increasingly characterized modern culture. This must surely lead to new methods of cultural study in terms of which the different arts and media can be integrated. Though it appeared during the heyday of industrial culture in the mid-twentieth century that American culture was going to be increasingly dominated by the "mass media," the trend of the post-modern has clearly been in another direction–toward an increasing proliferation of forms of expression, media, and genre. The culture of the future will be multiple and diverse and just how this increasing variety will be related to any traditional canons of American culture has got to be one of the major investigations of cultural scholars in the twenty-first century. This task is difficult enough that I am almost tempted not to regret the likely possibility that I will not be around long enough to share in these great new tasks of teaching and scholarship.



## The Future(s) of American Studies

David E. Magill
University of Kentucky

Panels on the future of American Studies often have unintended effects. Panelists suggest directions for inquiry, and those possibilities become the new focus while other approaches or subjects become marginalized. In an effort to avoid such a fate, I will mark no single *future* path for you. Instead, I want in this essay to examine *futures,* because American Studies, whatever its focus, has always been about possibilities, about blurring boundaries. American Studies grounds itself in the crossing of disciplinary lines to make knowledge, and that is the most exciting part of this area. This year's conference gave us papers on music, literature, historical figures, and cultural artifacts. In our panel, KTASA welcomed graduate students and professors, allowing both to take integral parts in our meeting and our discussion. Yet we cannot rest on our past accomplishments. What we must see in the future, if American Studies is to continue being a vital and invigorating field, is the continued proliferation of arenas into which American Studies dips its collective hands. We must continue to be open to different ideas and different methodologies, for American Studies is not so much a discipline as a sensibility. If KTASA is to be a part of that future, the organization will need to attract more members who can bring fresh insights. But I know you want me to be more specific, so here are two main points I want to make, and they are intertwined with the name of our area of study:

1. *America* is the focus of our studies, and the focus on what being "American" means leads us to questions of identity. Identity studies (studies of race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.) will continue to be with us because they are important examinations of the ways in which power has been linked to normative identities across American culture. My own project examines constructions of masculinity in the1920s, using literary novels, poems, and plays (the traditional canonical works) as well as popular novels, film, art, music, magazines, political treatises, and conduct manuals. My work draws from several disciplines (geography, psychology, history, and English) in its focus on American culture; in short, it embodies what I envision as an American Studies sensibility. In addition, I have found that much exciting work in American Studies focuses on questions of selfhood and identity construction.[1]

Some malign this work as "the latest fad," but I think that it's important work and that it will continue to inform our vision. However, I also think that we can expand our theories to include different conceptions of identity. Religion, for example, is one marker that could use more scrutiny; science and economics are other areas under-represented in work on identity. Considering American identity from an international standpoint will be crucial in our globalized culture. Limiting ourselves to race/class/gender is not an answer, but neither is eliminating race/class/gender.

2. *Studies* is the other word we need to focus on precisely because of its plurality. I often start my American Literature class by teaching Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" because it helps me teach the skills of close reading, something my students need to practice. Students always read that poem as giving two choices (one road or the other) and they want to read it as a poem about being an individual, taking the "road less traveled by," a reading they have learned from their parents and high school teachers and now even commercials on TV. But the poem is not about that–it's about nostalgia for the past and desire for meaning. The two paths the narrator describes are "just as fair" as he notes three different times. Yet my students continually overlook those descriptions and focus on the last lines, telling me that we should all take the less traveled path. What I would hope my students see is the silencing of the alternative of leaving the beaten path and heading into the trees or off to the side. The narrator's desire to see his life as meaningful leads him to suggest that the path he has taken is "the road less traveled by," and my students embrace his nostalgia without thought, missing the options the narrator refuses to acknowledge.

Many prognosticators of American Studies have asked us to study the "less traveled" areas. But forcing a choice between roads blinds us to all the other options. So I would encourage this group to come away not with a path or even several paths, but to cast out in all directions. Don't think that I want identity studies as the only topic for the next meeting—American Studies is vibrant precisely because it continually accesses different avenues for investigation. But let's not only argue retrospectively for "the road less traveled by." Let's also create new roads or better yet, simply wander into the woods and see what's there. Let's not mandate a direction, because that delineation will blind us to the opportunities off the road altogether. The excitement of our work is its interdisciplinarity and its multiplicity. Let's keep multiplying the possibilities.

Now the important question raised at our panel is how our association fits into the futures I (and the other panelists) are advocating. The continued presence of KTASA in these futures will depend on our ability to attract new members, and graduate students in particular are an important constituency both for their numbers and their invigorating effect. But this is not as simple as it sounds.

Graduate students may indeed be a resource of KTASA, but attracting them will not be easy. They face a depressed job market and increased pressure to make conference presentations and publish articles. Thus, many graduate students have focused on vitae building, a costly process financially and emotionally. Graduate students must attend multiple conferences to present papers and to network, but they must do so



with little support. As a result, they must make choices based in part on funding, which is even less than the small amounts most departments give their professors. In addition, graduate students are told to constantly move forward, to present at the better conference, to send articles to the more prestigious publication. While a certain amount of this is necessary, the current climate rewards those who avoid smaller conferences and those who show loyalty only to the almighty CV. Thus, part of the solution is that as advisors, professors must cultivate a different climate, showing students the benefit of cultivating regional connections, of joining and supporting different scholarly communities.

And KTASA must remember that the fact of life in academic departments is that graduate students move on. They graduate and get jobs, often in other regions. So the recruitment of graduate students is a continual process; members must continue encouraging their students to attend and present. And KTASA must also recruit from the younger professoriate, the newly hired professors whose work can help revitalize the organization and whose energy can help revitalize the organization and whose energy can help sustain it. Only through these efforts will KTASA continue to exist.

[1]For a few examples of this type of work, see Gail Bederman's *Manliness and Civilization*, Dana Nelson's *National Manhood*, Chip Rhodes's *Structures of the Jazz Age*, Mark Seltzer's *Bodies and Machines*, and Robyn A. Weigman's *American Anatomies*.

## Widening the Boundaries and Pruning the Vine: Some Thoughts on American Studies

Pam Warford
Georgetown College

Michael Kammen's recently published book, *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th Century,* recounts the story of a retiring Smithsonian director who, disgusted by the rising interest in popular culture, complained: "How the hell do you define pop culture anyway?" (7). The same question is often asked of American Studies. The issues of "What is American Studies?" and "Can American Studies develop a method?" have been the recurring questions for scholars in the field over the last sixty years. In recent years another issue has been raised: What is the future of American Studies?

Last June I was invited to participate in a week-long institute at Dartmouth College which was focused on this question of what lies ahead for the field. Forty-eight participants, from as far away as Singapore, gathered to exchange ideas and discuss issues associated with our respective programs. As rich as the experience was, with ten- to twelve-hour days of plenary and group sessions, at no point do I recall

anyone addressing the question, "What is American Studies?" or other methodological questions in an intentional way. As for the "future" of American Studies, and perhaps because we all had a vested interest, the consensus seemed to be that the field would endure though concern was expressed for the future of doctoral programs in American Studies. (Note: As someone with a Ph.D. in American Studies who has bounced back and forth between History and English departments, I think there may be some wisdom in that assessment, though my preference would be for more American Studies departments to provide a "home place" for those of us who pursued graduate degrees in the field.)

While I hope gatherings like the Dartmouth conference and our own national and regional meetings continue the dialogue on the three questions of who we are, how should we practice, and what future forms we will take, I think the tension between where we were when the field of American Studies began and where we are now is one that also needs examining. In Lucy Mattox's recent compilation of classic American Studies essays, *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline,* she claims that Henry Nash Smith was prophetic when he wrote, early on, that "The best we can do...is conceive of American Studies as a collaboration . . . working from within existing . . . disciplines but attempting to widen the boundaries imposed by conventional methods of inquiry" (vii). Yet, as she points out, "those disciplines themselves have been modified and expanded, in ways that Smith could not have foreseen" (vii-ix). In fact, many, if not most of us, come from specific disciplines and have seen them embrace poststructuralist theory, cultural theory, ethnic studies, and feminism, to name a few. Obviously, if we did not believe in interdisciplinary studies we would not be at this meeting, and yet how many of us find ourselves tongue-tied explaining our belief in American Studies to the uninitiated or to students who ask, "But what can I do with an American Studies major?"

The challenge facing American Studies is to find new ways of looking at the field and at the same time to redefine what it means to be an American in a global context very different from that of sixty years ago. Even our national association admits that we are in a bit of a rut, as new interdisciplinary areas have emerged since ours–Women's Studies, Ethnic Studies, Media Studies, Environmental Studies and Cultural Studies, to name but a few. Has American Studies become the Norma Desmond of *Sunset Boulevard,* the aging starlet who clings to the past? Some of you may be thinking, "Have you looked at the *American Quarterly* lately?" Well, I have, and frankly, the trend toward esoterica which can be found there is not what I have in mind; what I do have in mind is a call to reclaim what we can do best: make connections between the obvious and the sublime, the past and the present, in order to deepen our understanding of what it means, or a least a portion of what it means, to be a part of the American experience.

So while there might be a danger in that the field which embraced a new vision sixty years ago could rest on its laurels or fragment into increasingly esoteric and perhaps irrelevant directions, I do see signs of hope, particularly in the excitement of undergraduates looking at a period of American life through its literature, music, art, film, and popular culture rather than through the monocle of a singular approach. I find encouragement in the number of younger scholars at the Dartmouth conference who embraced cross-



disciplinary studies. Finally, I count myself in "the party of hope" when our own organization affirms that "American Studies has . . . been strongest when most flexible and outreaching; when it has worked self-consciously and creatively to integrate into its own study the newest research of other fields," to continue, in other words, to "widen the boundaries."

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## The Nature and Future of American Studies

Amanda M. Wilkerson
University of Kentucky

Because American Studies seems to be undergoing so much change, it is difficult to pin down exactly what the nature of this discipline is, and therefore speculate on where it's going. As I see it, however, the field will continue to diversify as it has in the past. Perhaps American Studies will eventually become so diverse that it will splinter into a number of distinct disciplines, leaving a more clearly defined core, but for the meantime I foresee only more growth. The umbrella that is American Studies will cover more and more specialties in the years to come.

Given this continuing diversification, what I would like to address first are some pragmatic concerns: In light of the field's expansion, what will become of American Studies departments and degrees? Currently, many American Studies departments are formed from faculty who are members of other departments. A typical American Studies department might draw faculty members from English, Film, History, Music, and Sociology. This department would offer a few core courses in American Studies as an introduction to the field, with the majority of its American Studies courses being classes offered in more traditional areas, such as American History, cross-listed for American Studies credit. This model for American Studies would seem to fit well with the field's increasingly broad, interdisciplinary focus. As more and more specializations come under the umbrella of American Studies, faculty members in these areas can become involved in American Studies departments shaped like the one described above.

But this being the case, what will become of the graduate degree in American Studies? An American Studies Ph.D. may have difficulty competing for a job. For example, an applicant with an American

Studies degree may be passed over by a History department in favor of a student with a graduate degree in History. Where will our graduates find placement? One answer would be in a second model of the American Studies department, which is not a collection of professors from other departments but is instead autonomous, comprised solely of American Studies specialists (each with a different emphasis) who are not associated with other academic units. Unfortunately, the structures and budgets of many colleges and universities do not allow for such programs. The question then becomes one of what degree options or emphases we should offer in order to make American Studies graduates marketable. This is a question that the changing nature of American Studies is forcing us to address now, and one that will continue to be debated in the future.

Additional questions about the nature and future of American Studies can be asked as a result of the changes advancing Internet technology has brought to the discipline. The information available through the World Wide Web has already shaped American Studies in countless ways. One development is that it is no longer necessary to live in or even visit the United States to engage in American Studies. Because almost every facet of American history and culture is represented on and accessible through the web in some form, American Studies programs are spreading throughout the world, appearing in such diverse locations as universities in Korea and Turkey. How will international perspectives of what is uniquely "American" change the discipline in the future? What insights can we gather from a perspective that originates outside American borders? The answers to these questions are difficult to predict, but in my own experience working with international students I have seen that the rewards of a cross-cultural examination of American life can be great indeed.

To close, I see the field of American Studies continuing its current rapid growth and diversification, in part as a result of Internet technology. This growth will bring with it the difficult question of how we should restructure our departments and degree programs in order to keep up with the changes and the excitement of seeing the type of interdisciplinary study we value shift from a continental to a global perspective.



# Types and Characteristics of Tennessee Log Houses

Michael Gavin
Summertown, Tennessee

Log architecture has long been associated with the South, and even today log buildings remain some of the more distinctive features of the rural environment. The log house was the first home of the pioneers, and sheltered them and their families as they transformed the wilderness into a settlement landscape. The western movement of the first half of the nineteenth century owes its greatest debt to the humble log cabin.

Although the one room cabin was the most common type of log dwelling and is the one that people are the most familiar with today, there are other forms extant that are not as well known. Indeed, log structures in general tend to be lumped together as if log buildings were a type, rather than a method, of construction.[1] Based on fieldwork and documentary evidence, the following is an attempt to establish a classification system for the various types of domestic log buildings found in Tennessee.[2]

The basic unit for the analysis of log plans is the pen, or crib when referring to farm buildings.[3] This pen is a four-sided structure composed of horizontal logs locked together by means of notches at the corners. Assorted notches have been employed over space and time, and log buildings have often been described in terms of the corner timbering.[4] Half dovetail, V, and square notches are the most common ones found within the state. The log pen is a basic element that could be used alone, divided within itself, or joined with others in various arrangements. It could also be expanded vertically to assume one-and-a-half, two, and two-and-a-half story forms in addition to the single story kind. This flexibility provided the backwoods builder with a large number of possible combinations to suit various situations.

Tennessee log houses can be organized into the following major classifications: single pen, double pen, and triple pen. Various subdivisions exist within each category. Each individual structure can also be modified by several different kinds of additions and porches. The richness of log architecture is illustrated by this diversity. Hopefully, an awareness of the variety of the types of Tennessee log structures will contribute to greater understanding of this vanishing folk architecture.

## BACKGROUND

The origin of notched horizontal log construction has been lost in the mists of prehistory. Some archaeologists believe that the roots of this ancient building method were established in northern Europe as long ago as the Mesolithic Age.[5] Housing made from logs was perfectly suited to a forested environment and the technique spread rapidly from its northern hearth area to gain widespread acceptance throughout the Continent. By the late medieval period, with much of Europe deforested, its application was restricted to

the hilly and mountainous districts that were unattractive to farmers. Northern Europeans were the main practitioners of this art at the time of Anglo-European settlement of the Americas.

The log cabin was brought to North America by the Swedes and Finns that settled around the Delaware Bay in the mid-seventeenth century.[6] Their understanding and implementation of woodland agricultural methods and log technology made the exploitation of the vast forested interior of Midland America possible. These Scandinavians were the only immigrant group to arrive in the North American colonies in the possession of a tested and successful woodland pioneering culture, of which the cabin was an essential part.[7]

The tight log dwelling that they erected showcased their considerable backwoods skills to the later arriving English, Welsh, Scotch-Irish and Germans. Members of these ethnic groups lacked this wilderness experience prior to their arrival in North America, but quickly adopted the expedient Fenno-Scandinavian practices. Although the members of each immigrant group maintained their own cultural identity at first, the continuing proximity to each other and the resultant merging through intermarriage and other social exchange blended the various influences.

Notched horizontal log construction for domestic uses was unknown in Tennessee until the arrival of Anglo-Americans in the late seventeenth century. Either Virginian explorers or traders from South Carolina introduced the concept to the Cherokee when they built log cabins as storehouses for trade goods in the Overhill towns in the Great Smoky Mountains.[8] This novel idea was later reinforced by the building practices of the settlers coming from the Valley of Virginia, and eventually log construction became familiar to all the Native American tribes of the Southeast.

Building houses with logs was a useful and easily learned technology. The material could be had for the labor of collecting it, and the thick wooden walls provided security from all types of predators. This ease of acquisition also made log structures easily disposable, a condition that contributed to backwoods mobility. Many farmers just walked away from their homesteads as they followed the frontier, searching for richer land.

In the movement westward, log construction became not only normal, but universal. Pioneers used two different kinds of structures for long-term shelter: the cabin and the hewn log house. The cabin belonged to the backwoodsmen who transformed the forest into a settlement landscape; the log house sheltered the farmers who followed them. The two buildings had different origins and functions and need to be considered separately.

LOG CABINS

The rough cabin used for initial settlement in the backcountry was usually a solitary room and windowless, sometimes with a partial loft. Occasionally the hearth was on the dirt floor with a smoke hole



at the ridge, but more often the cabin had a stick-and-dirt chimney lined with clay. The board-and-batten door was pegged together, hung on a wooden hinge, and locked with a wooden latch. The whole dwelling could be quickly built by two people using only axes. Its simplicity and ironless construction fit perfectly in the heavily wooded environment.

Green saddle-notched round logs and a low-pitched purlin roof defined the pioneer's cabin. For support, this roof required a series of long poles, or purlins, held up at each end by the logs in the gable. Each of these purlins ran the full length of the building. A purlin was placed at each eave and others continued up to the peak at approximately four-foot intervals. The roof covering of boards was laid on top of the purlins, and lapped over each other. Another set of poles was then laid over the roof boards and lashed down in order to hold them in place.

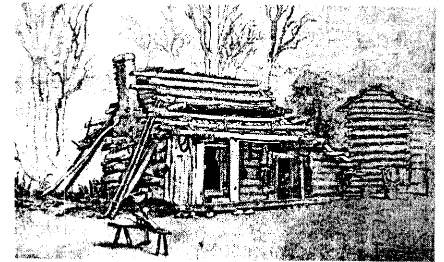

Figure 1. Porte Crayon [David Hunter Strother], *The Old South Illustrated* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), plate VI.

Unfortunately, because log cabins rested directly on the ground, none of them have lasted. Moisture, fungi, and insects have all taken their toll. Any earth-fast structure will quickly deteriorate in the hot, humid climate of the Upland South. As a result, the true log cabin that the pioneers knew exists only in contemporary descriptions, graphic images, or historically-based reconstructions (see Fig. 1). A few of these modern representations convey an accurate impression of a cabin's original appearance.

HEWN LOG HOUSES

What most people today call a log cabin was known to the people that built and lived in it as a log house.[9] While a cabin could be thrown up quickly by just about any able-bodied person, a house required the attention of a skilled builder and experienced hands. These houses were conceived through folk traditions, and followed straightforward and plain designs that were centuries old.

During the mid-1960s, folklorist Henry Glassie surveyed the vernacular buildings in a region which included eastern Tennessee.[10] He identified the most common dwelling type found in that area, a small one-room house he called the Appalachian mountain cabin (see Fig. 2). Virtually all of these "cabins" were single pen structures and were built of a variety of materials, including log, frame, brick, and stone.

Two distinct kinds of these dwellings emerged from the study: square and rectangular, although squarish would have been a more accurate term.[11] Each commonly had rock pier foundations and side-facing gables. The square houses were rarely partitioned, and usually there was no rear door. The front

door was generally near the center of the long wall, or displaced away from the chimney. On the rectangular cabin, the front door was located near the center of the wall, or toward the chimney. The rear door was directly opposite the front. This cabin was frequently divided into two unequal rooms with a plank partition. Ell additions and porches were more common on rectangular than on square houses.

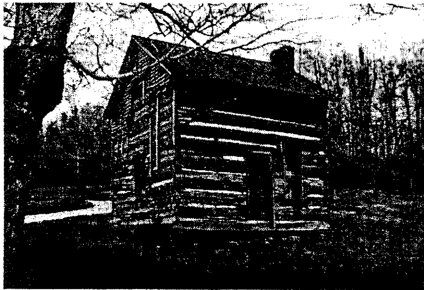

Figure 2. Appalachian cabin. Photograph by the author.

Sometimes another log or framed room was added to an end, the rear or, rarely, the front. A number of houses featured a separate kitchen situated at a right angle to the main house. This kitchen could stand alone or be connected to the rear of the main dwelling by means of covered porches or breezeways in either a tee or an ell plan. There were also some very creative arrangements, where the individual log pens were placed almost randomly in close proximity to each other.

The Appalachian mountain cabin was a product of the meshing of the German and Scotch-Irish cultures.[12] This cabin combined ancient British floor plans with German construction methods. As the bearers of the Pennsylvania culture progressed in a southwestward direction, most of the specific diagnostic elements of the Germanic "Continental" log house (large, squarish, three-room plan with an interior, off-centered fireplace) did not survive. The one-and-a-half story form and a number of important construction techniques remained as the heart of the emerging Upland log house.[13]

Much of early American architecture had a medieval quality about it and log dwellings especially retained many features from this period. These archaic characteristics included the one-room plan, multiple separate houses, certain standard dimensions, the use of oak timbers, roof overhangs at the eaves, exposed and beaded ceiling joists, a steep boxed corner stairway, a chamber room above, half-lapped and pegged rafters, board-and-batten doors, and whitewashing.

Although Glassie accurately described the primary features that defined the mountain cabin, including the shape, height, general size of the floor plan, placement of doors and chimney, and form of the roof, his choice of nomenclature was unfortunate. Architecturally speaking, cabins are simply one-room hall plan houses that are constructed of a variety of materials. The manner of construction or expected lifetime is of secondary importance. The old Irish term "cabin" had already been strongly identified with the Scandinavian-derived temporary structures described earlier. To reintroduce this term to describe a vernacular dwelling type is confusing and unnecessary. A permanent habitation should be viewed and studied as a "house."



The log houses of the pioneers can be divided into three groups: the single pen type, and the more complex double and triple pen varieties. Among the multiple room arrangements are included the familiar dogtrot and saddlebag varieties, as well as several rare and little-known forms. These larger buildings will be considered separately. Although the large "glorified pioneer" log mansions were rare in the mountains, they were very common in the Valley of Virginia and the Tennessee Valley, and a considerable number remain.[14]

Surviving log structures represent the last of the hand-crafted buildings that have been almost all swept away as the result of the Industrial Revolution. By the second half of the nineteenth century, houses made of mass-produced dimensioned lumber became economically more feasible, while newer and more complex floor plans became socially desirable. Although log buildings continued to be employed for rustic "cottages" at summer resorts such as Beersheba Springs, the traditional hewn log house became a thing of the past except in the poor rural districts.[15]

## COMPLEX HOUSES

Using the single cabin, or pen, as the basic module, the pioneer builder formed many different types of complex houses. These houses can be divided by construction methods into two main kinds: those that consist of a large log pen subdivided within, and those that utilize a series of individual pens linked by covered passageways or porches in order to form a large dwelling.

Generally the builders completed any walls within a log pen at the time of the initial construction, although changes through remodeling were common as time went on. The most common alterations were from single pen to either hall-and-parlor or central hall, or from hall-and-parlor to central hall. The carpenters had several options to choose from when sectioning the primary log unit. One was to divide the large pen into two or three parts with additional log walls. Other choices were to apportion the interior utilizing plank, or later, frame partitions.

A house with a single wall dividing the interior was referred to as the hall-and-parlor type. Typically, one room was square and larger than the other, and served as an entry "hall"; there was only one front door and two fireplaces. The smaller "parlor" was often used as a bedroom; among the Ulster-Scots, however, it was usually unheated. One-and-a-half and two story houses were common. An early version of this plan, called the "Cumberland" house, had a front door in each pen, as well as a connecting door between the rooms, which are approximately equal in size.[16]

A localized version of this plan can be found in some of the Germanic settlements that were founded in southern Middle Tennessee.[17] A log or plank wall divides the main log pen in half. Each side has its own centered front door and usually a window. There is no fireplace; a central flue serves a stove in each room. Often the top log on the middle and both end walls is cantilevered eight feet or so front and rear

in order to support the beam that supports the rafters. An open porch results on the front of the house, while a pair of rooms is framed in the rear.

Within some of the developing towns, a more fashionable variation of this plan appeared, the side passage. Often two stories, its facade echoed a three bay, two-thirds Georgian townhouse, with two windows and the front door to the side. Unlike the older hall-and-parlor, the entrance and stairway usually occupied the smaller room.

Figure 3. Double parlor house. Photograph by the author.

Different arrangements of the two parallel interior walls that divide a large pen produce three separate varieties of triple pen houses. These interior walls can be constructed of log, plank, or frame. If the two walls are centered on the building four to seven feet apart, the plan is called a central passage. If these same walls are somewhat further apart, from eight to fourteen feet apart, a central hall form results. If these walls are even further apart, so that the floor plan is one of a square room flanked by two smaller rectangular ones, a double parlor plan is formed. The double parlor house plan, well-known in the British Isles, but rare on this side of the Atlantic, is unique in Tennessee, with only one example recorded within the survey area in Middle Tennessee (see Fig. 3).[18]

Log pens that are divided into three rooms, the Germanic Continental plan, are rare in Middle Tennessee. This arrangement displayed a two-bay façade, and was carried in the mid-eighteenth century from its Pennsylvania hearth to the central and western Piedmont of North Carolina.[19] It never really caught on in the western country, however, and only two early nineteenth-century examples have been reported in this region. Significantly, both feature an exterior gable fireplace, rather than a large central chimney.

Figure 4. Cross passage house. Photograph by the author.

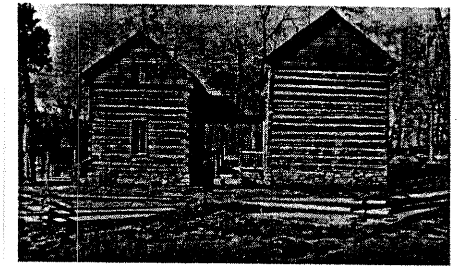

Figure 5. Double house. Photograph by the author.

Two-room houses constructed from two separate log pens are much more common. The idea of using a group of linked units built as an additive series appears to be descended from the medieval concept of multiple "houses." Instead of attaching the newer units directly to the original core, the log pens either stood independently or were connected to each other by means of covered porches. The two-pen plans not only had a natural appeal, they had adaptive value within the Midland pioneer architectural complex that was based partly on ease of construction and enlargement.[20] A number of arrangements were possible, producing a number of forms, including:

Dogtrot. A second pen built ten to twenty feet away from the gable end first, and then the whole roofed over. First generation houses commonly have one front door in each pen, while those of later generations feature windows in these openings instead, and utilized the doors facing the passage for entry. The gallery or piazza that came to be known as the dogtrot has persisted as a feature of Tennessee architecture.[21] It was known to its builders as a "double-house."

Cross Passage. Characterized by a narrow passage running through one end of the house, perpendicular to the axis of the ridge, that separates a small service room on side from a hall and chamber beyond it on the other (see Fig. 4).

Double House. Two houses situated one behind the other with their ridges parallel, commonly joined by a covered passage (see Fig. 5).

Upright and Wing. A two-story house situated next to a single story one so that their roofs are perpendicular. The two were commonly joined by an enclosed passage.

Unorthodox. Two pens placed adjacent to each other in random ways. One version features the corner of one pen touching a corner of the other as the only common point between the two.

Double Pen. Three log walls added to a single log pen on the end without the fireplace. Occasionally, a new log pen is placed right next to the first one, each retaining its own front door. This situation produced a double common wall.

Saddlebag. Two individual pens, each with one front door, arranged on either side of a common chimney. Second generation houses usually had a single front door, centrally placed. An alternate method was to add three log walls to the fireplace end of a single pen house.

**Tennessee Log House Types**

SINGLE PEN
1. Square
2. Rectangular
 a. one board partition
 hall-and-parlor (Scotch-Irish)
 side passage
 two front doors (Germanic)

DOUBLE PEN
1. Log partition
 a. hall-and-parlor
 b. Cumberland
 c. Germanic
2. Double pen
3. Saddlebag
4. Dogtrot
5. Cross passage
6. Double house
7. Upright and wing
8. Unorthodox

TRIPLE PEN
1. Center passage
2. Central hall
3. Double parlor

ADDITIONS
1. Front shed
2. Rear shed
3. Side shed
4. Ell
5. Tee

There are a number of ways of attaching a three-walled log room to an existing single pen log house. The most common way was the use of a corner post. A deep groove was cut on one side of a log that was set vertically and pegged to the side of the first pen. Then tenons were fashioned on one end of the logs to be used for the addition. These tenons were inserted into the groove and pegged in place. The other ends of the logs were notched in the prevailing manner.

At times the log ends were notched halfway into a thick vertical log; other times the logs were just spiked or pegged into a hewn vertical plank on the interior. Another way was to cut out half of each notch either vertically or horizontally, cut out the matching half in each of the new logs, and join the two in the same place.[22] The logs of the addition could also rest on the projections of the logs at the corners of the original house.

When discussing compound house forms, caution must be taken not to place too great an emphasis on the addition of the newer units.[23] Often, when students of material culture have commented on modifications of the single pen house, the additive principle is the dominating factor considered during the discussion.[24] The owner or builder has been portrayed as one who built sequentially, as circumstances or even chance dictated. In this view, the final form that the house assumed had developed as some sort of architectural accident.



This was not necessarily so however. Often, the single room house represented the reductive principle at work instead.[25] The owner's concept of his house was frequently more than his situation on the frontier allowed. Since domestic space does not need physical barriers to be complex, one room would suffice for a time.[26] The later expansion of the house occurred as a direct consequence of the initial contraction of a plan due to constraints imposed either economically or by the wilderness. When the distracting external pressures had subsided, its owners could expand the house in any number of different ways.[27]

These ways expressed a flexible concept of housing that had evolved from the single unit dwelling. The idea of a domicile that persisted among the primarily Ulster-Scot southern pioneers was not one of a proper house, but an understanding that a number of individual units could be strung together or stacked on top of one another to create living space. Thus the multiple room Upland log house is not so much a type as it is a product of a highly malleable approach to building with its own distinct cultural roots.[28]

Although the placement of these units could be quite random during the early settlement years, as time went on the succeeding owners often modified the older houses in accordance with the prevailing customs of domestic architecture. Throughout much of the Southeast during the nineteenth century, this meant either the central hall arrangement or the two story I-house. The individualistic and unorthodox room placements became much rarer as time progressed.

Tennesseans have always loved their log houses, and many found them difficult to give up. All across the state, single pen log houses have served as the cores for virtually every type of house that has succeeded them. The solid hand-hewn walls may be hidden from sight, yet they still firmly anchor the dwelling to the landscape. Even after the last human tenants' footprints fade away, the old log houses endure to provide shelter for livestock and fodder. They continue to serve us well.

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2. The author has measured, photographed, and recorded over 450 log houses in Middle Tennessee since 1990.

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4. Fred B. Kniffen, "On Corner Timbering," *Pioneer America* 1 (No. 1, 1969): 1-8.

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[23] Charles E. Martin, *Hollybush: Folk Building and Social Change in an Appalachian Community* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 26.

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# "The fuss I had with Sam dudley": Robert Wickliffe and Slavery in Mid-Nineteenth Century Lexington, Kentucky

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That some of the place names of central Kentucky's towns (Paris and Versailles) and counties (Fayette and Bourbon) commemorate the French Enlightenment's ideals of independence, liberty, and equality is ironic. Many of the original settlers, drawn to the Bluegrass region's rich, loamy soil, were members of some of Virginia's preeminent families; the Browns, Bullits, Breckinridges, McDowells, and Harts brought to the Bluegrass the hierarchical world of the Old Dominion and established the familiar plantation economy sustained by slave labor (Schoenbachler 5-6; 47).

One typical member of the new Bluegrass aristocracy was the so-called "Old Duke," Robert Wickliffe (1774-1859). A lawyer by training, Wickliffe served: as U.S. attorney for Kentucky; three terms in the Kentucky House from 1818-1828; and as adviser to his brother Charles, who was governor of Kentucky from 1839-1840. Wickliffe is remembered for vigorously opposing debtor relief during the Relief Crisis of 1819-1823 and, more especially, for pugnaciously defending slavery in a pamphlet war during the 1840s against the antislavery spokesman Rev. Robert Jefferson Breckinridge[1] (Ellison 951). His position on slavery is not surprising. In 1840 he had one of the largest slaveholdings in the state; most of his approximately two hundred slaves labored on his 1300-acre plantation in Lexington; others were mostly scattered among farms he held, in various times, in as many as ten outlying counties in eastern Kentucky (Watkins 28); others worked his iron mine, two forges, grist mill, lumber and sawmill operations, and a Lexington brickyard; and yet others were hired out in various capacities as domestics, laborers, and craftsmen throughout the region. Wickliffe's extensive correspondence with members of his family and business associates provides a selective insight into the operation of a slave economy.

From all appearances, Wickliffe practiced a relatively benign paternalism in his dealings with his slaves, one that was nevertheless guided by an unsentimental business sensibility that viewed slaves as property or capital assets. If his grandson, Charles Wickliffe Woolley,[2] is to be believed, "The negroes darkened his grave with their numbers & beat the air with lamentations" at his death (qtd. in Watkins 189), though their grief may admittedly have been heightened by alarm regarding their own future. Except for his personal manservant, William Box, whom Wickliffe set free in his will "to enjoy the proceeds of his labor during his life" (Wickliffe-Preston Papers Box 39, fol. 8),[3] all the rest of his slaves were either divided among his heirs or sold to settle his debts. In his will, however, Wickliffe urged the executors to respect marital ties: "[I]t is my wish that they regard in such sale, if and when made, the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, and see they be not sold or divided separately when it can be avoided, and sold to good and humane masters" (Box 39, fol. 8). However, he did not hesitate to instruct one of his overseers to "cow hide



well" a disobedient slave (qtd. in Watkins 169-70) or regularly make gifts of slaves, usually to his daughters. In the following letter that Margaret Howard Wickliffe Preston[4] wrote from Louisville to her father, we gain a glimpse into the mindset of a slave-holding family whose decisions are shrewdly calculated:

> I received your letter last evening offering me the choice of three of your servants for a washerwoman. I thank you very much and after reflecting upon it for a day I have determined to accept Dosea—Lousia's sister is too young to do the heavy washing of bed linen that we have done every week and the staying company that we have keeps Mary Jane too busily employed in the Kitchen to assist in washing one day in twenty—Ailsie's having children is a great objection to me as I have but a small grass plot which I wish for the play ground for my own children—and the expense of servants in town is a serious consideration and Dosea's being childless is to me a great recommendation. I only fear that you are making too great a sacrifice of your own convenience to mine in giving her up . . . . If you have not a good substitute for her I hope you will not send her as I prefer your comfort to my own.—I am not surprized at her repugnance to coming as I have no idea she will find her new occupation as lucrative as the old one. Matilda I shall send to the farm as she is only a burden and an expense to us. (Box 45, fol. 2)

In short, we can expect to see in Wickliffe all the behaviors, contradictions, and ironies that were necessarily inherent in slavery. Its mythology—that of the plantation as a community of common purpose and interest presided over by a paternalistic figure motivated by a desire to elevate his desperately benighted extended "family" from ignorance and damnation—competed with the much harsher reality—that slaves represented an investment and their fates lay entirely at the behest of a slave owner who could exercise whatever force was necessary to insure obedience among rebellious or unproductive slaves. In Wickliffe, elements of this conflict are manifest: in varying degrees, kindness competed with control, paternalism with economic necessity, benevolence with discipline, liberality with self-interest. Ultimately, the exigencies of the ledger and the prerogatives of ownership shaped much of Wickliffe's relations with his extended "family."

Inconsistent treatment and contradictory practices were simply built into a system where values based on race and skin color determined worth. On the one hand, in a chatty, lighthearted letter to her father relating myriad domestic matters—visits, cooking, entertaining—Margaret Preston tells about one of the younger members of her black "family":

> Melinda tells me she loves you more than all the world—that she doesn't like me much. . . and that she isn't as happy here as when at 'old Masters'—her attachment to you is extraordinary. She is an excellent little girl and in the absence of white children I find she is becoming our household pet. (Box 39, fol. 10)

However much Melinda may have loved "old Master," the selfsame master was prepared to make a gift of a young boy, Charles, to Mary Howard Preston.[5] She writes:

> I accept with many thanks your present of the Negro boy Charles and will send for him in a few days to be taken to Arkansas. . . . I will again write you and request that you. . . place Charles on

> the car under the charge of the conductor to be delivered to me . . . until then please let him remain on the farm as I assume he will not attempt to escape. (Box 8, fol. 5)

Margaret Preston's momentary or whimsical indulgence of Melinda may have eventually proved to be unintentionally heartbreaking when the child grew older and discovered her status and market value. Other slaves were outrightly reduced into an exchange medium: in one legal transaction, Wickliffe accepted "the boy Tom" as a contingent fee for settling an estate (Box 7, fol. 3).

The recurring trope in slave narratives—that of slaves being merely variant forms of labor, as so much livestock or farm machinery to be disposed of according to the whims or momentary fortunes of their masters—is starkly and chillingly conveyed in the reports periodically submitted by managers and overseers. These reported on the condition of the operation and farm stock, the health of the slaves, and their numbers (including additions over the past year by natural increase), and gave estimations of their ages and value. For instance, of "A List of Stock & Negros of the Howard Grove Farm on January the 1st 1840," as it is titled, concludes so: "Making in all sixty-four Negros 31 Males / 33 females amounting as per valuation to seventeen Thousand one Hundred Dollars, the six children born last year not included." On this same page is "A List of Stock" which included head of cattle (124), mares (36), horses (47), mules (20), jackasses (2), sheep (176) and lambs (70) (Box 12, Howard's Grove). Enoch Burns simply listed all of the slaves on the Piedmont Farm by name and under the heading of "Negroes all sorts & Sizes" (Box 12, Bath County, Piedmont).

The reality of slaves as capital investments whose well-being as producers had to be protected is evident in contracts drawn up between Wickliffe and other parties. For instance, John Ebelin, Wickliffe's partner in a Lexington brickyard business agreed, among other things, to clothe, feed, and lodge Wickliffe's hands at the rate of "seventy five cents each a week" (Box 7, fol. 3). A contract between Wickliffe and one William Thurston, dated September 6, 1825, after settling such matters as their respective contribution of slaves to the "common stock" ("at least two Negroe Men and one Negroe woman and two Boys or a Boy and Girl") and their deposits of "hogs, sheep cows & horses"), required of Thurston that "The Negroes are to be fed and clothed off of the farm and Thurston agrees to take the same care of Wickliffe's Negroes that he does of his own" (Box 7, fol. 2). Other arrangements read similarly: Joseph Angell, the manager and overseer of Piedmont Farm in Bath County gained "in consideration as of his wifes attention to the house hold checken and dary and other things appertaining to the household. . . the use of the femail servent as a chambermaid and wash woman [and] that the said wife of the said Joseph Angell is to superintend to cutting and sowing negro clothing." Indeed, the archival file folder holding these documents includes, as do many others, an undated listing of expenditures submitted by Angell detailing the previous year's cost of maintaining the farm's twenty-two slaves; it included shoes, shirts, dresses, pants, lengths of calico and flannel, thin cotton for lining dresses, a vest, even one pair of gloves (Box 12, Bath County, Piedmont).

On occasion, fulfilling some of these contractual stipulations for hired out slaves proved onerous, most notably when they became sick. A note dated October 22, 1845 reads:



> Mr. Wicklife Your Woman has bin sick for some tim and is nuthing but an Expence to me. I hire her from Mr Huteson til Crismus for 25$ and was to give her a linsey dress par of shoes and stocens. I have give her the dress and shoes. It wold be doing me a greate favor if you can take her hom and send me one to fill her plase til Chrsmus. I have no good plase to ceape a sick woman and no boddy to tend. Your truly H. Bush. (Box 7, fol. 9)

That Wickliffe exacted strict adherence to such stipulations is evident in an exchange of letters that took place on March 17, 1854, with one J. H. Shropshire. Under the guise of acting in the best interests of a slave, recently taken sick, whom the Broadway Hotel's proprietoress hired as a cook from Margaret Preston, Shropshire wrote Wickliffe about the possibility of removing him "to the Country or somewhere where he would not be so much confined. We do not like to see him confined which it is injurious to him and would like to make some arrangement with you or Mrs. Preston's agent . . . to give the boy up believing it would be better for his interests as well as . . . [our] own to do so." Shropshire's ploy didn't work as evidenced by another note, also dated March 17, 1854, in which Shropshire vigorously backpedaled after receiving, in the interim, a firm note from Wickliffe detailing his responsibilities to Margaret's slave: "I have only to say that I know it is our duty to keep the Negro during his sickness and have him properly attended to which you may rest assured will be done. . . . The boy is in very comfortable quarters and will receive all the attention or probably more than the law would require of us" (Box 8, fol. 7).

Wickliffe's concern for his slaves' well-being was motivated as much, perhaps, by his desire to protect his own substantial capital investment in them and keep them productive as his humanitarianism. Wickliffe's contrasting responses to two different incidents illustrate his attitude forcefully. In a letter dated September 2, 1854, Robert G. Johnson, the manager of Old Forge in Owingsville, Bath County, reported the outcome of what he called a "fuss" with one of the slaves:

> On yesterday morning I ordered one of the Boys Sam Dudley to go & get and take to the stone quairey a sledge & bar which he refused to do. & I made an effort to compell him & he engaged with me for a fight. & to save myself I was compeld to shute him. But as it hapened he is not much Hurt. . . . I think if you will send one of your gran sons or Mr. Preston [William Preston?] up immediately & you will direct such steps taken as will bring the hands to a state of fear and obedience they can be managed otherwise they seem to & will doo as they please. . . .

Wickliffe, as was his wont, acted expeditiously, promptly taking steps to terminate his contract with Johnson, but not before Johnson pleaded his case in a subsequent letter:

> You said to me in one of your letters if I could not manage the negroes without resort to fire armes you seam to think that I had better abandon my present position am I the first one in your employ that shot a negro[?]. . . there is no man but what would of shot him for he had holt of me when I shot him and two of the other negro men came running to asist him after I had shot him he threw rocks at me and swore that he would kill me if ever he got well.

Below in this same letter, Johnson tellingly adds: "I do not wish to injure your proppenty or for you to be [loser] by me" (Box 12, Bath County, Old Forge).

Evidently, the shooting of Wickliffe's "property" stepped beyond the permissable bounds of discipline, though whipping did not. In a May 5th, 1858, letter from the manager of the Piedmont Farm, also in Bath County, Joseph Angell reports on a slave, Nancy who, after a so-called "difficulty" that erupted into a physical fight with Angell over the making of summer clothes, ran away:

> I had a difaculty with my negro women Nancy & she has run off & I think has started for Fayatte. I wod bee glad you wod put your overseers on the alert for hur. . . . The difaculty orrignated a bout the making of ther somer clothing my wife had caled hir & a nother one in to hav ther shinneys cut out & thay had talking verry sasey to my wife—say thay diding want thus & so &. I hapened in . . . I told hur to giv them what suited hur & ask them no qustins & thay both commenst talking about what Preston a lod them & I told them toshe[t] ther mouth & nancy she speaks up & says if you dont [want] us to hav eny thing you can keep it. I went to hir & slaped hir a time or to & she struck me I stoped & got my whip & that I wod giv hur a whiping & she ran out of the Hous & getherd a litel wagon for to defend hur self with & I struck hur with my whip & she droped the wagon picked up 2 rocks & I picked up a raik & struck hur a time or two with it & she kep making battel with first one & then a nother rock untel she handeled 20 mor or les rock tho in the rounds I got holt of a walking stick . . . I at last got hur conqured.

He leaves Nancy to return to her "sowing" [sewing?] only to discover at dinner that she is missing. Several days later, on May 9th, Angell reported that he found Nancy, that "she had umbled hurself to me," and hoped that "this will giv them a leson so I wont have any more trobel with them." Evidently pleased that order was restored and that his property came to no permanent harm, Wickliffe kept Angell on as manager of Piedmont Farm (Box 12, Piedmont).

Not surprisingly, then, Wickliffe's other overseers determined that caution was the more sensible part of acting precipitously when it came to disciplining Wickliffe's property. W.W. Atchison, the manager of Water Dell Farm, in a letter dated April 18, 1859, appraised Wickliffe of the current state of affairs regarding Old Dick:

> their is one thing that is getting to be more trubblesom to me than Sickness Old Dick is getting vary carless & has got so that he wont do the grinding Only as he pleasses & wear loosing a heap of customs he has got So he will Sas a most any boddy and have bin givin me Some of his insolence and I have bin trying to a voyd a difficulty with him Some time I dont wish to have out with him a tall for I am Sattesfed how it will result in case I have to under take to Whip him. I have thought proper in me to let you know his conduct & you will know how he has bin treated & you know his disposition. He is one grand Old Raskel & is know getting all the profetts of the Mill in my opinion if there is any. I have caught him at his Rascallity some time a go but have sed nothing to you about it I am Sattesfied that it would pay to hire Some honeste man to tend the Mill and take him entirely a way from it he wont doo any Sawing a tall—Scearsly and I am so through that I cant be a bout the Mill to notice any thing much. Old Caty is here and dooing nothing pretending to say She is not able to work.



He concludes his letter by asking Wickliffe to take them home as "they ar a disadvantage to you hear" (Box 12, Bath County).

Resistance to their circumstances by slaves or even outright rebellion took several forms. For instance, Bob simply left Bath County, about 60 miles east of Lexington, to visit his wife. Atchison writes that Bob

> asked me to lone him a horse to ride to see his wife which I did then he took the hors and he has run off from me and gon down thair I hope Sir if he has not Started home by the time you recive this letter that you will yous Severe Means with him and Start him back to Me as Soon as you Can I have lernt from some of the blacks that he sed if he could get to go that he intended to stay thair untill Spraing whch I hope you will not Suffer him to doo as I am in Need of his work as much So as any of the rest of the hands. I will ask you to Not think hard of Me about his leaving Me for I New Nothing of it attall at the time. (Box 12, Bath County, Water Dell)

Other slaves simply set their own agendas. Herman Williams writes about one man's choice of a new spouse away from Wickliffe's plantation:

> your black man ned has a wife at my house I do not no if you are in the faver of it are not ned said he did not want to live with you are eney of your famley he maid hevey threts on his wife he has at home she was at your hous last mid sumer and in the Crismas and he was with her I asked him his reason for leaven his wife at home and taking up with his brothers wife I did not like his conversasion . . . he Scandlised you and your famley all in this nabir hood if he had not ben a fraid of you he wold have nocked more black out of that woman that livs with you. (Box 8, fol. 2)

The obedience and tractability of his considerable slave holding—in 1839, for instance, Wickliffe owned an estimated 180 slaves valued at $73,000 (Watkins 161)—so as to insure the efficient and productive running of his various interests, required that they be healthy. While many of his contemporaries disregarded both economic self-interest and humanitarian impulses in attending to the sick or injured (Stampp 315), Wickliffe had trained physicians attend to his bondsmen. An itemized physician's bill submitted in November 1833 totaled $230.51 for prescriptions, bleeding, and cupping at Wickliffe's Howard Grove Farm for a total of thirty visits: "For attendance for 17 or 18 other visits. For Pres. Meds Bleeding & cupping & to twenty-eight different cases of sickness. As many as 12 sick at a time" (Box 7, fol. 5). Another, among many such bills, was submitted by a Dr. D. Keller for the period between November 1849 to May 19, 1850, totaling $42.00; items included dressing wounds, lancing, prescriptions, and blistering (Box 12, Ellerslie, Baker). In a related issue, as Kenneth M. Stampp notes, slaves were not immune to mental disorders (305). One correspondent sought Wickliffe's advice in a June 25, 1832, letter regarding a deranged slave:

> The negro has had fits for 4 or 5 years & very lately went entirely dranged & they have to keep him chained to prevent him from killing or hurting the family. . . . Mr. C. Hamilton and R. Spalding wish to ascertain through you if said can be got to the Lunatic hospital as there is great danger of his injuring the family if he remains where he is besides his mistress is a poor widow & has no way to

take care of him & thinks that if he can be got to the Hospital he might be cured & finily be of service to this family. (Box 7, fol. 3)

The state of his slaves's health was a recurring subject in very nearly all of the correspondence that passed between Wickliffe and his overseers or managers, though managers' reports often served merely as preludes to pleas for additional help. For instance, in a letter dated June 18, 1854, W. W. Atchison wrote:

> Also you requested me to give you the health and condition of my blacks they ar in moderate health Catherine 1 of the women lost a young one since I tole you last and come near dieing but she is now up and going about a little. The girl Chat is now in the family way and is not in a condition to be exposed and she is the Girl that gets up and milks the cows. So I am needing of a boy . . . badly try and send me one that is bigenough to plow and work in the crop when is not otherwise engaged. (Box 12, Bath County, Old Forge)

A December 9, 1858, letter from Atchison mentions in passing that "Chat gave Birth to one child it lived to be 5 or 6 months Old and died." Thomas L. Johnson reported on August 20, 1859, that

> Tildy is sick at this time and is taking medicine from under the doctor and he thinks that She will never be a healthy girl any more you will be under the necessity of Sending a girl to Cook and wash for the boys if She is made do the washing and Cooking the Doctor says that it will Certainly kill her my wife is not able to do the washing and Cooking for the negrows and my family to and old Caty is hardly able to Cook and wash for herself and old Tom. So I will be under the necessity of hiring a negro women if you Cant let me have one. (Box 13, Ky. River Lands, Johnson & Russell)

From Water Dell Farm in Bath County, W.W. Atchison wrote on April 18, 1859, that "I have had a good deal of Sickness a mong Our family hear Lately but they ar able now to be up an dooing a little Work it has bin trubblsom to me to have so Much Sickness" (Box 12).

This same manager reported earlier in January of that year on the desperate case of one slave who seems to have suffered from the all-too-common injury among slaves of a hernia (Stampp 306):

> Since I wrote you Last Sollium has taken Sick or Rather has got a hurt from lifting and has bin Layed up evary Since this Makes the 16th day that he has bin confined we have bin giving all the attention that we could and I now think that ther is no chance of his recovery the Doctor thinks his chance bad for a recovery though as long as there is life ther is Some hope the Only cose of his being in the fix he is he Ses he went to lift a Log of wood and when he made his lift he Ses he felt Somthy give way in his bowles but Sed that it did not hurt him Much at the time but the next day he laid up and thair he has bin evary Since and that is the onley cose of his Ilness that we can account for though Should he get well it will be a long time before he will be able to do any thing. The Rest of the family is all in good health the Boy & Girl that you Sent Me Seems to be vary well Sattesfied.

In the very next sentence and without missing a beat, Atchison reports on the condition of the stock ("good") and the "young Wheet" ("as well as can be expected") (Box 12, Water Dell, Bath County).



Predictably, considerations of age, in addition to the state of a slave's health, figured significantly in business transactions between buyers and sellers. For instance, Wickliffe evidently purchased the slave holdings of the recently dissolved Burney estate. His correspondent described the parcel:

> Jim a stout able bodied man about 30 or 35 yrs. old.—He is fond of liquor but would be useful in the country. His wife is named Milly. She is older than Jim & can be hired here for about $30 per year but it would be better to take her with her husband. Joe is an old man who has been hired to Mr. Shippers for about $20. per year. He is about 60 or 70 years old, a family negro who would consider it very cruel to be taken off. He can black Mr. Shippers boots & do considerable service in his way which is to be allowed to act just as he pleases and rather to scold the white family than to be governed by them—Little Bazel is a boy about 10 years old, rather delicate but will make a good house servant. . . . He is worth probably $400. All the rest are included in the loan VIZ Bazil a good man about 50 yrs. old Sarah his wife about same age good svt. Mary: a good woman say 20 yrs old Ellen, a good house servt about 15 Two children of Sarah 8 & 10 yr old one of them sickly. (Box 3, fol. 3)

Eager to sell his slave so that he could pay for land he recently purchased in Indiana, another correspondent pitched Rachael's health: "thare is no doubt now a more healthy slave" (Box 7, fol. 5).

While Wickliffe was prepared to vigorously defend the institution of slavery, and to discipline, sell, and hire out slaves for his profit, his second wife, Mary Owen Todd Russell,[6] could not rest easily in her role as a slave mistress. Her correspondence to her husband is filled with the anguish of a deeply troubled conscience, her anguish exacerbated by deep religious sensibilities. In an undated letter to her husband, presumably early in their marriage, she appears to be wrestling with the matter of how to dispose, humanely, of her slaves:

> I [cannot?] for a moment think of compultion in this case. I think it as great an act of tyranny to force them to go as to retaine them in slavery & I fear they will not go voluntarily. I have had no opportunity of conversing with many of them. I do not think they would like to be hurred into the measure . . . they have there attachments as well as ourself & I need not tell you how much I think & feel for them. I . . . hope God will in some way provide for their future benifit.

And, in another letter she laments, as she does in many others, that she "cannot remedy one thing . . . the situation of that unhappy race of being of whom we have so many & for whom I feel the deepest sympathy—how great our responsibility! O that God may give us wisdom & grace to <u>know</u> & <u>discharge</u> our duty towards them." We learn how she did in a legal statement dated March 8, 1841: "I state that my husband R. Wickliffe manumited & sent to Liberia of the slaves that were mine before our marriage seven in number" (Box 39, fol. 4). Before making the trip downriver to New Orleans for the passage to Liberia, Milly[7] wrote to her former mistress on March 1, 1833, from Frankfort:

> My Dear Misstress we have all arrived at frankford in safety and health little George Lucy and all the chldren are well. My Dear Misstress how shall we thank you for all your kindness too us. We some times desspond being all females and children haveing no male protecter of our own, but we try to put our trust in the Almighty and go on in his strength. whatever betide us My Dear

Misstress you have done your hole duty, and may the [Lord] bless and reward you a thousand fold. Lucy [and] all [send] love and thanks to you for your goodness care and kind ness to us all. the children all desires me remember them to Misstress. Misstress we all desire you thank Mayster for his goodess and kindness to us. I hope the Lord will bless him give our love to miss Margaret miss Mary Miss Sally Wolly and all our friends. the Lord has raised up manny freind to us in frankford we are treat with so much kindness by all who see us. . . . May the [Lord] bless preserve and reward you for all kindness is the praire of your unworthy but affecttinate servant Milly C. (Box 39, fol. 3)

In Liberia, this former slave family settled in Clay-Ashland (the capital city of a little colony, located fifteen miles from Monrovia), known has "Kentucky in Liberia" (Hollingsworth, "4 Letters from Liberia to Kentucky"). A subsequent letter from a recent emigre dated September 28, 1835, and addressed to Mary Owen Todd reported extensively on the grim fortunes of her former slaves: Lucy's daughter succumbed to the fever that left her two eldest sons disabled as it did Milly's son (Box 39, fol. 3).

In July 1855 Milly's son Alfred wrote a letter to Wickliffe that included a loving eulogy about "Miss Polly" [Mary Todd Russell Wickliffe]: "[W]e had been reared like spoiled children & servants, and if our parents or any one else wanted to give us a deserved whiping we flead to Mis Polly, believing that the whole State of Kentucky could not take us from beside her chair. Who can ever forget that Blessed woman? Her form and kindness is still fresh in our Memories." After detailing the political circumstances in Liberia, Alfred ends the letter asking Wickliffe to send him law books for which he no longer has any use (Box 39, fol. 3). Alfred went on to be vice-president of the new republic and for a short while (1883-January 1884) its ninth president (Hollingsworth, "4 letters from Liberia to Kentucky").

Such stories of redemption, however, were unusual. More typical were the circumstances related in a letter written by Margaret Haws,[8] the wife of an escaped slave, to her former master, William Preston,[9] Margaret Wickliffe's husband. This letter, written against the backdrop of the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850, is dated from Pittsburgh, October 21, 1850:

> Respected Sir I take this apetunity of riting to you to let you know that Charles and my self are well hoping that these lines may find you and your Dear wief the same. Mr Preston I feal verry bad and verry mutch grived and are labbering under A grate menny disadvantage. Charles is afraid to gow out of the city on the account of the Slaiv bill, and if you wood bea sow kind as to give Charles his free papers, I wood bea more satisfied not that I think that you wood disturb him but there is others that will doe it Charles says that he will never come to lewesvill if you will give them to him I hope that you will bea sow kind to fullfill your promes and that is to let my Mortherenlaw Come, please answer this as soon as you can nothing more at present but remain you friend and well wisher Margaret Haws. (Box 45, fol. 6)

One of the most troubling letters from a former slave conveys a range of conflicting emotions: pride and humility, anger and forgiveness, rebelliousness and submission. Sent from New York, dated



February 8, 1854, and addressed to Margaret Preston, it reads:

> Madam. I take this oppertunity to wright you these few lines to inform you that I am well at this time and I hope you are the same. Dear madam I sopose you wonder why that I left you. Well I will tell you the Reason one Reason was because you Parted me and my housbond as tho we had no feeling and the Next Reason was because you accuseed me of stealing Monney and I was not gilty of it but because I am coulard You sopose that I have not got any feelings I have feelings thank god as well as you and I sopose you feel the Loss of me as much as I do the loss of you. I worked for you when I was with you and dear madam I am working for my Sealf and let me inform you that I Loved my housbond as wel as you do yours if I never see him again in this world but I am in hopes to meet him in Haven. I sopose you will call this impedance But I do not I have nothing Against Mr. Preston he treated me well he would not have sent my husbound away had it not been for you and I would have been yet with you. But Never mind Every boddy must have trubble. I Remane Yours Jane Giles.[10] (Box 49, Preston, W. Family Cor. 1854)

This paper is a fragmentary effort to resurrect, if only momentarily, these despairingly incomplete bits of lives. That we do not find in these fragments a dramatic story of liberation or latter-day enactments of redemption from Egyptian bondage makes them all the more painful to read. What is missing in these fragments is the drama and release we experience in most slave narratives that speak in a voice of moral indignation such as we encounter in the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs. In short, these incomplete bits of lives will sadly remain forever lost in death as they were in life.

[1]Robert Jefferson Breckinridge (1800-1871), a minister and so-called "father of the Kentucky public school system in Kentucky." Breckinridge served as Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1847-1853. Despite being a slave owner, he supported gradual emancipation and colonization, and sided with the Union at the outbreak of hostilities (Klotter 120).

[2]Charles Wickliffe Woolley (1831-1903), the eldest son of eight children by Sarah "Sallie" Howard Wickliffe (1806-1873), Robert Wickliffe's oldest daughter, and Hon. Aaron Kitchell Woolley (1800-1849).

[3]All subsequent references to the Wickliffe-Preston Papers, housed in Special Collections of the University of Kentucky, are noted by box and folder number. Where folder numbers are missing, I have provided identifying folder information. In the interests of accuracy and authenticity, I have retained the spelling, punctuation, and grammar of the original documents.

[4]Margaret Howard Wickliffe (1819-1898), the oldest of Robert Wickliffe's two daughters by Margaret Preston Howard (c. 1778-1825); wife of William Preston (1816-1887).

[5]Mary Howard Wickliffe Preston (1817-1892), Robert Wickliffe's youngest daughter.

[6]Mary Owen Todd Russell (1799-1844), Robert Wickliffe's second wife (m. 1826), the daughter of Lexington's legendary frontiersman Colonel John Todd. After her death, the Todd family filed suit for the return of her vast properties (at the time of her marriage, her land and slaves were valued at $250,000). In 1857 a court of appeals ruled in favor of Wickliffe (Ellison 951).

[7]Milly Crawford. Upon her mother's death in 1822, Mary Owen Todd Russell purchased Milly and her son Alfred, who was rumored to be the offspring of a liason between John Russell, Mary's grandson, and Milly, an octoroon. Set free in March 1833, Milly and Alfred, together with their cousin, Lucy Russell, and her four children, left for Liberia, arriving there on July 11, 1833. For more information about Milly, see Hollingsworth, ""4 Letters."

[8]Margaret Haws. For additional letters related to Margaret Haws's pleas on behalf of her husband, see Hollingsworth, "Letters to a Former Master."

[9]William C. Preston (1816-1887), husband of Margaret Howard Wickliffe, served in the Kentucky House of Representatives and as ambassador to Spain during the Buchanan administration. After Abraham Lincoln's election, he returned to Kentucky; with the outbreak of hostilities, he left with his cousin, John C. Breckinridge, to join the Confederate Army where, eventually rising to the rank of major general, he served under the command of his brother-in-law, General Albert Sidney Johnston. After serving briefly as Confederate minister to Mexico in 1864, he served with Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith in Texas. Securing a pardon in 1866, he returned to Lexington where he remained active in Democratic politics (Hay 738-39).

[10]For fragmentary bits of correspondence related to Jane Giles, see Hollingsworth, "More on Jane Giles."

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# Becoming a Surrogate Brother: Lizzie Hardin's Civil War Diary

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Like scores of young women during the Civil War, Lizzie Hardin of Kentucky kept a diary in which she recorded important events and relationships using the language, style, and tropes of antebellum fiction. Hardin's diary provides a unique subversion of the popular surrogate sibling antebellum trope. In the traditional literary rendering of the trope, young men and women adopt one another as siblings in a pre-courtship phase. In novels such as Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1858), Maria Cummins' *The Lamplighter* (1854), and Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), this phase of surrogate siblinghood frequently provides useful protection while young people become acquainted. This surrogate bond acts as a cover while the pair examines their characters and compatibility. In the Civil War diaries of Alice Ready of Tennessee and Clara Dargan of South Carolina we see the traditional pre-courtship association with surrogate siblinghood.[1] Both of these women adopt young soldiers as brothers in order to investigate their attraction. But Lizzie Hardin is not interested in using the surrogate sibling trope in a pre-courtship experiment. Unlike these other diarists, Hardin finds this custom limiting and unsatisfying. She is not ultimately interested in using the trope to incorporate potential suitors into her family circle to examine their suitability. Instead, she engages in the trope in order to participate in the emotions and sacrifices of the Civil War.

Lizzie Hardin (1839-1895) was a descendant of two of Kentucky's most prominent nineteenth-century families. Her grandfather Ben Hardin (1784-1852) was a Kentucky statesman and three times United States Congressman. Her uncles and male cousins had continued the tradition of public service and law, holding many offices in central Kentucky.[2] The male members of her mother's family, the Chinns, were likewise lawyers and politicians; her maternal grandfather, Judge Christopher Chinn (1789-1868), was still a powerful man when the Civil War began. It is with these men that Hardin wishes to be identified. But the death of her father, James Pendleton Hardin, at age thirty-two in 1842, and her mother's remarriage to an English-born clergyman threatened Hardin's self-assured association with these families. Due to her strained relations with her stepfather, Hardin clung to her family connections more than most young women and wanted to be regarded as an asset to the Hardin name.

Like the Civil War diarists Clara Solomon of New Orleans and Fannie Page-Hume of Orange, Virginia, Lizzie Hardin was in jeopardy of being distanced from the war due to her status in an all-female household.[3] The death of Hardin's father when she was a child left her without that potential connection to the war. Hardin invested no hopes in her stepfather, the Reverend Joseph Cross. In fact, his existence is never mentioned in her entire Civil War diary. Thus, while Solomon expended a great deal of energy worrying about her father and futilely hoping he would prove a hero, Hardin had no viable father figure through whom she could participate in the war. Fannie Page Hume was similarly faced with tenuous family connections at the onset of war, but her brother's enlistment and bravery soon provided her with a strong sense of belonging and status in her community.



But Lizzie Hardin was the oldest of four girls. Of the younger two, Sarah (d.1862) and Mariana (1853-1867), Hardin says very little. She does not even comment in her diary on the wartime death of one sister. Her sister Jamesetta (Jimmie, 1840-1927) appears more frequently in the diary as a lively companion (or more accurately a witness) to Hardin's adventures. Instead of delineating her relationships with her sisters, Hardin initially stresses her relations with her grandfather Chinn and her two male cousins, Kit and Jack. Hardin works hard in her diary to create a close, surrogate sibling relationship with her cousins in order to feel a part of the war effort.[4] As we will see, Hardin is quickly disenchanted with the traditional expression of this trope and modifies it to suit her emotional needs and strong temperament.

Lizzie [Elizabeth Pendleton] Hardin. From a photograph made circa 1858-1866. Photograph courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Moreover, unlike Solomon and Hume, who were surrounded by people of solid Confederate sympathies, Lizzie Hardin was a native of Kentucky. While Hardin and her family were fiercely Southern, many of their neighbors professed equally strong Union loyalties. The complex relationships that occurred in such divided communities can best be illustrated by an analysis of a similar situation in Lexington, Kentucky. There a square around a small residential park was home to the social elite of the town. They intermarried and socialized until conflicting loyalties divided them. On one side of the park resided Henrietta Morgan, mother of General John Hunt Morgan and five other Confederate soldiers. In the same square lived Dr. Robert Peter and Benjamin Gratz, ardent Unionists, with their daughters Frances Dallam Peter (1843-1864) and Miriam Gratz, both Civil War diarists.[5] Friends before the war, Frances Peter consistently attacks Mrs. Morgan and her circle of "secesh ladies" (September 18, 1862) in her diary. On another occasion, caught up in the emotions of war, the normally respectful teenager mocks this mother of eight children. On December 21,1862, Peter tells "a good story of Mrs. Morgan" who has asked the Union commander to send her the intercepted letters of her son. The commander reads aloud General Morgan's request for badly needed clothes, humiliating the proud woman.

This small circle of politically divided former friends is representative of many small communities in Kentucky. The state, as well as Missouri and Maryland, remained a border state throughout the war and as such could not provide its citizens with a sense of either complete Union or Confederate allegiance. Lizzie Hardin and her family experienced this same ambivalence or division of loyalty.

For these reasons, Lizzie Hardin begins the Civil War without any real sense of connection to the community. In order to provide herself with a means of stabilizing and expressing her commitment to the Confederate cause, she uses the trope of the surrogate brother who will fight for her causes. When her attempts to align herself to a surrogate soldier-brother fail, her diary records her efforts to create herself in the image of the absent brother. Like Jo in *Little Women* (Louisa May Alcott, 1868) or Capitola in *The Hidden Hand* (E.D.E.N. Southworth, 1859, serial), Hardin relies on own actions and casts herself as the family soldier.

In 1861, Hardin, her sisters, and her mother traveled through Virginia and Tennessee to live with Judge Christopher Chinn in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Hardin adopts a language of possession when she speaks of the soldiers leaving Abingdon, Virginia. Self-consciously aware of her presumption, she writes, "the intelligence that 'our boys' had at last received orders continually coming through, continually proving false, kept us always in a distracting hurry" (19-20).[6] She notes in her diary the poignant good-byes of families at train depots, paying close attention to the "sisters sobbing in the arms of brothers what might have been eternal farewell" (24). A few days later, Hardin relates the tale of a young slave who has accompanied his master to war, and then makes the incongruous observation, "The look with which he [the slave] brought out his climax of horror would have made me laugh if I had had a brother in the company" (30). The longing of Hardin, who has never had a brother, is evident in this odd ending to a short anecdote primarily intended to show the ignorance of the slave. Seeing all these soldiers surrounded by their sisters, Hardin feels excluded. She joins in the laughter of the group, but questions her authority to do so. Her position in the audience is that of observer, not participant. Surrounded momentarily by soldiers, Hardin wonders what



it would be like to have a brother among them. Hardin wishes to be a full participant in the scene with the right to sob in the arms of one soldier. She puts her imagination to work when she reaches Harrodsburg. Living in the same town as her grandparents are her first cousins Christopher (Kit, 1846-1864) and John Pendleton (Little Jack, 1849-1920) Chinn. Lizzie Hardin turns to them on her arrival in hopes of adopting them as brothers and participating in the war through their sacrifices as soldiers.

In 1861, Kit and Little Jack are only fifteen and twelve. While eventually both would serve in the Confederate army, the boys are poor soldier material when Lizzie Hardin arrives in town, a fervent patriot looking for ways to show her dedication to the war effort. Hardin makes one overt effort to involve Kit in the war and through him provide herself with a connection to the conflict. When John Hunt Morgan, Alice Ready's future brother-in-law, begins his supply and recruitment raids in the area in mid-July 1862, Hardin undertakes to aid Kit's efforts to join the raiders. She rationalizes that although Kit "had just passed his sixteenth birthday and was so small and delicate he looked near twelve...he was as hardy as a mountaineer and could scarcely remember when he learned to ride or shoot" (77). Hardin helps Kit saddle their grandfather's horse and gets him past the Union home guards. When she returns home alone, she confesses to her family, "What do you think I have done?...I have helped Kit go to Morgan!" (79) However, underage Kit is captured and returned by the Union pickets within a day. After this humiliating escapade, Hardin ceases her efforts to push Kit into service and through him participate in the war. When Morgan himself arrives in town a few days later, Hardin tries to dissuade Kit from joining. She distances herself from Kit by describing the ignominious removal of the boy from a raider's horse by his father: "He [Uncle Jack] lifted Kit off the horse and landed him on the ground feeling in a small and juvenile way like Icarus when his wings melted" (91). Kit returns to the doorstep, "where he sat and cried and refused to be comforted" (91). Whereas before Hardin had commended Kit for his perseverance and his "manly inquiry" into her safety (77), she now shows her disillusionment with the trope that only allows her to participate in the war through a man's actions.

Lizzie Hardin's independence and desire to participate in the war without mediation through another person are evident from the start of her diary. On the first page of her diary she chafes at "having only the boy's privilege of 'hollering' for my candidate" (1). Here is a strong-minded woman who has independent political views she wishes to express and support. While she jokes about her political invisibility, her serious conviction of her own abilities is clear. In the first few pages of her diary she comments on her self-conscious reading of histories and novels: "Perhaps there are few of us who in reading stories of ancient heroism or the romance of modern war have not had some idle thoughts of the role we might have played in similar circumstances" (17). Hardin does not just wonder what it would be like just to exist in another time period, she imagines what "role" she might play. She desires to play an active part in whatever historical events occur around her. Hardin's continued willingness to credit the adoption of honorary brothers as the sole way for a woman without brothers or any male relatives in the army to participate in the war is doubtful.

Instead of relying on the traditional manner of creating a brother, Lizzie invests in herself. Like Jo in Alcott's novel *Little Women*, Lizzie balks at the idea of asking for someone else's help. She does not want

to be dependent. In the novel, Jo famously sells her hair to get money for their mother's journey to nurse their wounded father. Capitola in E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Hidden Hand* is even more assertive. When her two cousins, John Stone and Edwin Percy, refuse to defend her honor by calling out Craven Le Noir for slandering her "as free and easy" (362), Capitola takes action. She renounces both cousins, "THE MEN are all dead! If any ever really lived!" (366), and calls Le Noir out. In the duel with guns loaded with split peas, Le Noir is injured, confesses his lies, and defends Capitola's actions. Her guardian Old Hurricane, however, articulates the real issue when he lambastes her, "Demmy, you New York newsboy, will you never be a woman?" (376).[7]

Lizzie Hardin does not want to risk being branded unwomanly. Like many Civil War diarists, Hardin's patriotism for the South and her hatred for the Yankees causes her to proclaim what she would do "if I were a man" (48), but she does not actually wish to disguise herself and join the army.[8] Hardin instead manages a deft tweaking of the surrogate brother trope that allows her to become the Hardin family honorary brother. Rather than leave her family, hide her identity, and enlist in the army, Hardin manages to merge the competing needs of her honorary brotherhood and her status as the granddaughter of Ben Hardin. Hardin becomes a "soldier" who bravely fights the Yankees, but her weapons are gestures, the written word, and debate. With these tools, Hardin takes up the banner on behalf of her family and manages to become the honorary Hardin brother she longs for.

Lizzie's campaigns against the Yankees have all the daring independence of her hero, General John Hunt Morgan, a man she greatly admires. Like Morgan, Hardin operates behind enemy lines, often without the full knowledge and approval of her "commanders," her grandparents and her mother. She has the power to recognize or snub men. On the streets of Nashville in early 1862, she reproves a childhood friend, Dick Davis, who has joined the Federal army. She tells him, "Never! Never! I'll take the hand of no man who wears that uniform!" (41). And while she rejects a publicly humiliated Davis, she warmly embraces and kisses a cousin in Confederate uniform she has not seen in years, much to his astonishment (35). Her actions, carefully considered and deployed, are elements of her own battle for independence. The public reproof of one man and recognition of another are intended to send messages to all those watching about her patriotism and support for the Confederacy. Her early skirmishes also included several letters written under the name "Lucy" to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* in which she takes the editors to task for the "horrible stories" of the rebels. She proudly relates their refusal to debate and records the editor's printed retreat, "Lucy of Harrodsburg will please excuse us. She is entirely too sharp for this department" (73). Hardin's willingness to resort to verbal argument and writing to fight the war can be attributed in part to her mother's career as a novelist by which she supplemented the family's income.[9] Publishing under the name Jane T. H. Cross, Hardin's mother provided for her daughters powerful example of the influence of writing. Not only did her mother's earnings contribute to the family's faltering finances, but her writing also resulted in flattering recognition among a certain class of Southern society. Hardin knew the economic and persuasive value of speaking and writing.

All of these small efforts for the Confederate cause demonstrate Hardin's effort to participate in the war and function as a fully authorized, or male, member of her family. The majority of Hardin's diary,



however, covers her one great campaign that evolves after a single gesture of support for General Morgan. When Morgan finally arrives in Harrodsburg, the Confederate women of town turn out to welcome him. Some are restrained, knowing that members of the Home Guard and Union sympathizers are watching, but Lizzie boldly welcomes the raiders in the center of town by waving her handkerchief. This gesture by women was viewed by many Union commanders as traitorous and resulted in fines or the temporary imprisonment of several women.[10] Hardin is aware of the possible consequences of her actions. When her mother cautions her, Lizzie replies, "I'll wave it if I die for it!" (82). To publicize even more aggressively her Confederate sympathies, she runs up and "shak[es] hands with old acquaintances" among the soldiers (82). Hardin uses military language to describe her grandfather's order to return home: "I have no doubt his intentions were good when he gave the cruel order for the homeward march and that like a good officer he would never order his command where he did not at least intend to go himself" (83). Hardin is a special kind of soldier, fighting with her own weapons, and seeking to gain honor for the family name. She does not rely on a surrogate brother to provide her a vicarious sense of participation in the war but takes up the Hardin family banner as the family's honorary brother. This day's "battle" places Hardin in an arena where she can best fight her war for the Confederacy.

After Morgan's raiders leave town and the Federals return, the town's Union sympathizers inform on their Confederate neighbors. The Hardin women are warned that they may be arrested, but refuse to flee. When grand-father Chinn is arrested, Lizzie goes to the jailhouse with her mother and sister. Eventually her words and gestures goad the Provost Marshall into arresting her while her grandfather is released. She writes glowingly of her skirmish with the Yankees:

> In the meantime I had arrived at the extreme limit of my patience—never of any great extent—and was insisting rather stormily on being let in. Jimmie [her sister] stood by but said nothing, only adding her tears to mine. In the course of my remarks I occasionally digressed to express an abstract opinion as to the relative merits of Yankees and Southerners. Also as to the right of the former to drive native-born Kentuckians from their homes. (103)

While her sister stands crying, Lizzie Hardin takes up the honor of the Chinn and Hardin families and does verbal battle with a roomful of Yankees. Hardin equates herself with popular images of intelligent but highly sensitive people by defiantly admitting her impatience and temper. She uses the jailhouse forum to "express an abstract opinion as to the relative merits of Yankees and Southerners," a topic no proper, unmarried woman should publicly debate. The sisters and mother are arrested, and Lizzie Hardin continues her campaign in the courtroom and public opinion.

Hardin spends a full third of her revised Civil War diary detailing events from the time she waved her handkerchief at Morgan to her eventual expulsion from Kentucky into Confederate territory, a period of two months in 1862. Once arrested, Lizzie functions as the honorary male protector for her mother and sister. A former neighbor, now a Union man, visits the women, and tries to console Mrs. Cross and Jimmie. Hardin approves of his obvious wariness at addressing her:

> He looked doubtfully at me as though not quite certain how a friendly demonstration might be received. I jumped down from the table where I was inelegant enough to be seated at the time, and

offering my hand told him I hoped he would allow me to apologize for what I had said that morning and would not believe that I was not in the habit of using such unladylike language. (109)

Hardin controls the scene by forcing the visitor to comfort the women while she watches, perched like a boy on a table. She makes him approach her and then magnanimously offers her hand, one equal to another.

In the next chapter of her diary narrative, Lizzie Hardin sets forth the particulars of her courtroom battle with the Yankees and lays claim to a share of the family's legal prowess. Her success in the courtroom proves that she is a full member of the Hardin and Chinn family of famous lawyers. She records the courtroom dialogue and her many verbal triumphs over the Yankee lawyer prosecuting their case. She relates how by laughing and appearing totally confident, she flusters the prosecutor, Mr. Riley (122). She even transcribes into her diary several depositions submitted to the court. Finally Lizzie and her mother and sister prove to be too much for the command at Harrodsburg, and they are sent to Louisville for imprisonment after refusing to take the oath of loyalty to the United States.

Once in Louisville, Lizzie Hardin takes her battle to the court of public opinion. She notes with understated pride that their arrival under guard disconcerts the Union commander, who is uncertain what to do with three female prisoners (146). Moreover, Hardin relishes the fact that the women rate a reference in the morning paper. She finds a notice of the arrest and imprisonment of "three female rebs. Mrs. Cross and the two Misses Hardin had been brought from Harrodsburg and placed under guard at the Croughan House" (151). Soon the three women find themselves beset with female callers and their plight a subject of debate in the city (156). The Union commanders quickly realized the public relations fiasco of the arrest and imprisonment of three women for waving handkerchiefs, and expel them to Confederate lines for the duration of the war.

The events in the summer of 1862 are the highpoint of Lizzie Hardin's wartime experiences. She does not bother to rewrite any portion of her daily notes through 1863-1864, and only resumes her diary in April 1865 to record her feelings and experiences as the war ends and the women return to Kentucky. Lizzie Hardin has fought her great battle and claimed a politically influential or male position within her family as well as the Confederate nation. She expressed the depth of her sympathy for the loss of the Confederacy, "I hope I may never love anything again as I loved the cause that is lost" (May 3, 1865), as she succumbed to the belief that she can no longer hope to add luster to her family name.

Lizzie Hardin follows in the wake of a small group of fictional heroines who refuse to rely on the assistance of another. When her attempts to adopt surrogate siblings whose battle experiences she can share fail, Hardin decides to fuse identities. Without disowning her female gender, Hardin instead expands traditional gender roles in order to fulfill the expectations of an honorary brother. She protects her mother and sister from insult; she defends the family honor in a Union military courtroom; and she conducts her mother and sister safely to Confederate lines. Moreover, Hardin manages to accomplish these goals without jeopardizing her status as a lady.



**Author's Note:** *This paper is part of a book-length manuscript on sibling relations as portrayed in the Civil War diaries of young women. In the course of reading over one hundred diaries of Northern and Southern women aged fifteen to twenty-five, I noticed two patterns. First, for many of these unmarried women the most important relationships in their lives are with their siblings. Secondly, in crafting these family bonds in their diaries, young women often appropriate the language, style, and tropes of antebellum fiction. Many of these diarists conscientiously record their literary reading. By making repeated references to the novels of Charles Dickens, E.D.E.N. Southworth, Anthony Trollope, or Maria Cummins these diarists hope to attain literary authority by association. They also borrow freely from these works for tropes of sibling behavior. In my reading of antebellum fiction I have identified four such tropes: the practice sweetheart, the surrogate sibling, and the sacrificing sister. The fourth trope, lessons in self-esteem and identification, functions as a warning for siblings tempted to invest themselves too deeply in another.*

[1]The Southern Historical Collection holds Alice Ready's diary manuscript for 1860-1862. Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. Duke University acquired the papers of Clara Dargan Maclean in the 1940s. The diaries (1860-1920) are the center of the collection. Clara Dargan Maclean Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, NC.

[2] Another grandchild of Ben Hardin, Benjamin Hardin Helm, is chiefly remembered today as Lincoln's "rebel brother-in-law." Each man married a Todd sister of Lexington, Kentucky: Mary Todd Lincoln and Emily Todd Helm. Information about the Hardin family of central Kentucky can be found in several reference works: "Hardin Family—General John Hardin," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 6 (September 1904): 39-41; entries for "Benjamin Hardin," "John J. Hardin," and "Martin D. Hardin," *Biographical Dictionary of the American Congress, 1774-1971* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971); and entries for "Col. John Hardin," "Martin D. Hardin," "Benjamin Hardin Helm," and "Benjamin Hardin," *Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky: Dead and Living Men of the Nineteenth Century* (Cincinnati: JM Armstrong & Company, 1878).

[3]Clara Solomon Diary, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA. The diary has been edited for publication by Elliott Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon: Growing up in New Orleans, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995). Fanny Page Hume Diary, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. A version of her diary has been edited for publication as *1861 Diary of Miss Fannie Page Hume, Orange, Virginia (Orange:* Orange County Historical Society, 1983)

[4]Civil War Diarist Myra Inman (1845-1914) of Cleveland, Tennessee, also belonged to a family of four sisters supported by a widowed mother. Like Hardin she turns to her male cousins, Frank, Alfred, John and Joe Lea, once the war has started in order to participate in the war effort. The words, "Cousin John started in Knoxville this morning to join Captain Eldridge's Company" get underscored in the diary as do all subsequent references to the Lea cousins' military careers. The diary of Myra Inman is in theMyra Adelaide Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville,TN.

[5]The University of Kentucky holds both diary manuscripts. Frances Dallam Peter Diary and Miriam Gratz Diary, Evans Papers, Special Collections, Margaret L. King Library, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY. An abridged

version of Peter's diary has been edited by John David Smith and William Cooper Jr., *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky: The Diary of Frances Peter* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

[6]Lizzie Hardin's manuscript diary was held by the Pioneer Museum of Harrodsburg, KY. This museum no longer exists, and its collections have been dispersed. The location of the original Hardin diary manuscript is unknown. The Margaret L. King Library of the University of Kentucky made a microfilm of the manuscript in 1955. The Hardin diary has also been edited for publication by G. Glenn Clift, *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin: A Kentucky Confederate Girl's Diary of the Civil War in Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia* (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1963). During the war Hardin jotted short notes that she later expanded into narrative form. Her diary is generally undated and divided into chapters, as one would present a novel. In citing this diary I will use the regular pagination of the Clift edition.

[7]E.D.E.N. Southworth, *The Hidden Hand; or, Capitola the Madcap*, ed. Joanne Dobson (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

[8]In another Southworth novel, Britomarte Conyers, the man-hater who has repeatedly refused to marry the man she loves, joins the Union army in order to be near him. She proves to be a heroic soldier, rising to the rank of Captain after saving his life on more than one occasion (E.D.E.N. Southworth, *How He Won Her, A Sequel to Fair Play* [Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson, 1869]). The 'if I were a man' theme is present in several diaries by young women. Lucy Breckinridge writes, "I wish the women could fight, and I do think they might be allowed to do so in the mountains and fortified cities.... I would gladly shoulder my pistol and shoot some Yankees if it were allowable" (August 13, 1863). Sirene Bunten pledges, "Oh what a glorious flag is ours, if I were only a man to help fight for it. I believe I could fight" (July 1, 1863). Katherine Stone makes her contempt for men who remain at home during war clear by stating her conviction that she would not act so if male: "How can a man rests quietly at home when battles are being fought and fields lost and won everyday? I would eat my heart away were I a man at home these troubled times" (February 1, 1862). Sarah A. G. Strickler records her frustration at the Yankees: "we clenched our fists and Shook them at them; we could do nothing else. Oh! If I was only a boy, to fight them—it chafes me so sorely to have to submit to their insolence. Why was I not born a boy? in spirit I am all man" (March 4, 1865). Even Alice Ready admits to a desire to prove her hatred for the enemy: "I never before wished I was a man—now I feel keenly my weakness, and dependence. I cannot do or say anything—for 'it would be unbecoming a young lady'—How I should love to fight and even die for my Country—our glorious beautiful South—what a privilege I should esteem it, but I am denied it because I am a woman" (April 15, 1862). (Lucy Breckinridge, *Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill: The Journal of a Virginia Girl, 1862-1864*, ed. Mary D. Robertson [Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994]; Sirene Bunten, *"We Will Know What War Is": The Civil War Diary of Sirene Bunten*, ed. Stephen Creswell [Buckhannon, WV: West Virginia Wesleyan College Press, 1993]; Alice Ready Diary, Southern Historical Collection; Katherine Stone, *Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868*, ed. John Q. Anderson [1955; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995]; and Sarah Anne Grover Strickler Fife Diary, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.)

[9]Hardin's mother published several books after her second marriage under the name Mrs. Jane T. H. Cross. They include: *Bible-Gleanings*, ed. Thomas O. Summers (Nashville: Stevenson, c. 1853); *Duncan Adair; or, Captured in Escaping. A Story of One of Morgan's Men* (Macon GA: Burke, Boykin and Company, 1864); *Azile [A Novel]* (Nashville: A.H. Redford, 1868); and *Driftwood*, ed. Thomas O. Summers (Nashville: A. H Redford, 1871). In her important study of five nineteenth-century Southern women writers, Elizabeth Moss makes clear the political influence women could exercise under the guise of sentimental fiction. The authors studied by Moss—Caroline Gilman (1794-1888), Caroline Lee Hentz (1800-1856), Maria McIntosh (1803-1878), Mary Virginia Terhune (Marion Harland, 1830-



1922), and Augusta Jane Evans Wilson (1835-1909)—project the image of a sophisticated and cultured South with people content in their level of society, as planters, merchants, or slaves. (Elizabeth Moss, *Domestic Novelists of the Old South: Defenders of Southern Culture* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992]). For information about Jane T.H. Cross' writing career see Mary Forrest, *Women of the South Distinguished in Literature* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1865), 354-386, and James Wood Davidson, *The Living Writers of the South* (New York: Carleton, 1869), 116-120.

[10]Civil War diarist Ellen Renshaw House is warned that she will be sent South for waving her handkerchief: "Mrs. Martin had just told her two young ladies were to be sent South immediately, for waving their handkerchiefs to the prisoners on Sunday morning, and as she knew we were the ones, she thought we were to start right off. No such good luck for us. I wish to heaven they would have sent me. They could not possibly please me better" (January 13, 1864). Later that year House was sent South and refugeed in Tennessee and Georgia for the rest of the war. Daniel E. Sutherland, ed., *A Very Violent Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Ellen Renshaw House* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996).

# "After Reading Thoreau": The Literary and Artistic Vision of Emma Bell Miles

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The intention of this paper is to establish and explore the influence of New England transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) upon the life and work, literary and artistic, of Southern Appalachian writer and artist Emma Bell Miles (1879-1919). The primary questions motivating this study are: How did his intellectual influence shape her life and work? How did the realities of her life affect her reading of Thoreau? How closely did her view of the natural world and of human nature coincide with his?

Miles herself—and I shall henceforth refer to her as Emma—described Thoreau's impact upon her life and thought in her poem, "After Reading Thoreau," that was published in the October, 1906, issue of *Century* magazine:

Last night into my house and heart, dense-walled,
A winged wind there blew;
Into dull ears and duller soul it called
A message strange and new.

Pouring upon me a primeval youth
A fresh and tonic stream,
It brought the certainty of innate truth
From worlds of which we dream.

Out of a silence deep and undefiled
That wind forever springs,
The magic and perfume of the wild
Bearing on mighty wings.

And I, prisoner of dogging thought,
Put sloth away from me,
And set the claims of self and sense at nought
By that which made me free.

So, now, I stand content within my door
To watch the year go round,
As simple health and life bring more and more
Dear joys of light and sound.[1]



For Emma, Thoreau's message was authentic, coming as it did from a great New England literary tradition, those "worlds of which we dream." It brought into her house and her heart the seductive "magic and perfume of the wild," causing her to set aside more conventional ambitions to have "that which made me free." She had perfectly understood the message of Thoreau, who saw the wild as the basis underlying civilization, and for whom wildness equaled freedom. However, the end result of her commitment to Thoreau's message, even though it was yet to be revealed, was already more complex than the simple life, bringing "dear joys of light and sound" that she portrayed in the final stanza.

Among those reading the poem was Anna Ricketson, the 71-year-old daughter of Thoreau's friend, Daniel Ricketson, of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Miss Ricketson lived with Walton, her 68-year-old brother who was a sculptor, at 10 Anthony Street in New Bedford. She was inspired to write a letter of appreciation to Emma Bell Miles for the sentiments she had expressed in "After Reading Thoreau," much as her father had written Thoreau a letter of congratulations soon after the publication of *Walden* in 1854.[2] Thus began a correspondence and a contemporary relationship that reinforced the intellectual bond between Miles and Thoreau.

Miss Ricketson's letter reached Emma in the late fall or early winter of 1906. Emma, her husband Frank, and their three small children were living in a rented house that was little more than a shack on Walden's Ridge, a spur of the Cumberland Plateau in southeast Tennessee near Chattanooga. She waited to answer the letter until after the birth of Katharine, her fourth child, on January 19, 1907. In it she expressed her amazement at receiving a letter from someone so intimately connected with Thoreau and the tradition he represented. She hinted at her family's impoverished circumstances by saying it was "almost impossible to get a square meal in the whole neighborhood" and explaining that she sold sketches and postcards to the summer people to support her growing family. She conveyed a sense of her isolation by saying she had not been to town since June and did not know when she would go again.[3]

In her response, Miss Ricketson promised to send Emma a copy of *Daniel Ricketson and His Friends,* a book she and Walton had edited and published in 1902, and she enclosed a photograph of Walton's bust of Thoreau. She also promised to send Bradford Torrey's *Spring Notes from Tennessee* (1896). Torrey, editor of Thoreau's journals published the previous year, had visited Walden's Ridge in 1894 and included a chapter on his visit in this book.

Miss Ricketson, having read between the lines of Emma's letter, also offered financial help. Emma did not refuse it, but she asked Miss Ricketson not to think of her as miserable. "I am a very happy woman—more so than most I know who are in better circumstances," Emma wrote. "I am fortunate as a wife, a mother, and as a lover of outdoors. Certainly one must not let the mere lack of money interfere with one's whole plan of development and life."[4] This was a woman who had read and who agreed with the words Thoreau had written in *Walden,* "A man is rich in the number of things he can afford to let alone."[5]

If she seemed an unlikely convert, it would have been in part because she was a woman. Thoreau kept mostly to the company of men, if he was in company at all: his friend Ricketson said "the life of Thoreau was mostly within himself or rather with the company he entertained there, as he would probably have expressed it."[6] Further, Thoreau mentions few women in any of his writings.

Toward the latter part of his life Thoreau met a woman who did share his sensibilities and commitment to wildness. In April of 1857, while visiting Ricketson in New Bedford, Thoreau went on a walk with a young woman named Kate Brady, who was twenty. Formerly a maid at the Ricketsons, she had read *Walden* and had hopes of returning to her family's old farmhouse where she could "live free," as she put it. In his journal entry of April 23, 1857, Thoreau wrote, "I never heard a girl or woman express so strong a love for nature." He noted that "her own sex, so tamely bred, only jeer at her for entertaining such an idea, but she has a strong head and a love for good reading, which may carry her through. I would by no means discourage, nor yet particularly encourage her, for I would have her so strong as to succeed in spite of all ordinary discouragements."[7] Bronson Alcott, who was at Ricketson's when the two met, later suggested that Thoreau may have fallen in love with her. Despite his obvious interest in Kate Brady, Thoreau shied away from any attachment, concluding his journal entry on Brady with the comment, "All nature is my bride."[8] Thoreau himself may not have recognized the depth of commitment that a woman might make to living freely, especially a woman such as Emma Miles whose circumstances in the woods in Walden's Ridge would seem to limit rather than expand human possibility.

Like Kate Brady, Emma Bell's first encounter with Thoreau occurred when she, too, was just twenty years of age. In the fall of 1899, friends sent Emma to the St. Louis School of Art, then one of the few art schools for women in the United States and one of the best. She spent two winters there, but later feared she had disappointed her friends because she neglected art to read books she had obtained from the St. Louis Public Library. At first she made random selections, reading Tolstoy and Zola. Then sickened by what she described as "an overdose of European hyper-civilization," she remembered that a friend had once told her to read Thoreau.

She began with a collection of essays and lectures that included "Walking" and "Wild Apples." Next she read part of the *Journals* and *The Maine Woods.* The influence of Thoreau, coupled with her own homesickness, led Emma to regard life in St. Louis as only a world of dreams. "I wanted to go back to the mountains and reality," she later explained in a letter to a friend, "and back I went, almost at once." She returned to Walden's Ridge resolved to stay there, despite her father's hopes of sending her to New York and Paris for further study.[9] Like Thoreau, who on his second trip to the Maine woods described wilderness as "the raw material of all our civilization," Emma chose the reality of the woods.[10] However, Emma's father, schoolteacher B.F. Bell, who had grand ambitions for his only child, might have agreed with Ralph Waldo Emerson's reaction to the wildness in Thoreau: "Very seductive are the first steps from the town to the woods, but the end is want and madness."[11] Emma's course was set, however, and she never went back on it.



Emma spent the summer of 1901 painting and sketching, but she was in a restless, rebellious mood. Her mother, a restraining influence and the more nurturing parent, became ill with pneumonia and died in early October. Just over three weeks later, on October 30, Emma defied both her father and convention by eloping with Frank Miles, who was mountain born and bred, and almost illiterate.

Before her marriage she had belonged to a different class altogether than the mountain people of Frank Miles. The daughter of two missionary school teachers who had been educated at the Indiana State Normal School, the unusually intelligent Emma had learned to read at age three and was reading the Bible and newspapers by the age of six. Schooled at home almost exclusively, she worked her way through a ten year's supply of *Harper's Monthly* and exhausted the family's small library. Then she turned to the out-of-doors, roaming the woods along the banks of the Ohio near Rabbit Hash, in northern Kentucky. She filled sketchbooks and learned the common and botanical names of plants, birds, and small animals. She also began the life-long practice of keeping a journal. By her early teens she was accomplished both as an artist and a naturalist.

When Emma was eleven, she and her parents moved to Walden's Ridge in southeastern Tennessee, where she began her study of nature in earnest. She associated with the children of wealthy Chattanoogans who summered on Walden's Ridge in the area around Mabbit Springs, some of whom later became her patrons and sponsors. But she also spent time in the woods and among the mountain people. Around 1898 she fell in love with handsome Frank Miles, who was temporarily employed driving the hack to and from Chattanooga. Miles and his family, the first to settle the Ridge, lived in almost primitive circumstances and were barely literate by "civilized" standards. They were also her entrée to the world of the mountain people, who were separated from the people of the town by a then impassable social gulf.

Shortly after their marriage, Emma found among some second-hand books a copy of *Walden* which she and Frank read aloud in the evenings—undoubtedly Emma did most of the reading—for several years. Emma said she valued it above all other books they owned. Her own choice to live with the isolated mountain people on Walden's Ridge echoed Thoreau's words: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."[12]

Her choice, however, involved essential and significant differences. At Walden, Robert D. Richardson, Jr., has pointed out, Thoreau "might be leading a primitive life, but it was being led in a backyard laboratory."[13] Furthermore, he was leading it alone, whereas Emma was raising and essentially supporting a family of five children and a husband who was never employed more than temporarily. Yet, "the wild," or an approximation of it, was for each a creative environment. Emma wrote and published poems, stories, and two books, and painted mountain scenes and portraits for the summer people, whereas the only two book-length pieces Thoreau managed to prepare for publication during his lifetime were both "essentially shaped during the [two] years at Walden Pond."[14]

Just as Thoreau is identified with *Walden,* Emma is principally known for one book, *The Spirit of the Mountains,* published in October of 1905 by James Pott & Co. of New York. In this account of life among the mountain people of Walden's Ridge, which she called "King's Creek" to protect their privacy, she wrote movingly of their love for the beauty and freedom of their wilderness home:

> Their intimacy with it dates from a babyhood when the thrill of clean wet sand was good to little feet; 'frog-houses' were built, and little tracks were printed in rows all over the shores of the creek; when the beginnings of aesthetic feeling found expression in necklaces of scarlet haws and head dresses pinned and braided together of oak leaves, cardinal flowers and fern; when bear grass in spring, 'sarvices' and berries in summer and muscadines in autumn were first sought after and prized most for the 'wild flavor,' the peculiar tang of the woods which they contain.[15]

Her book is very different from anything Thoreau wrote, in that it deals with nature as a setting not only for plants, birds, and wild animals, but also for people who were close to nature in a way that the townsmen of Concord were not. She writes about children, their mothers, and domestic activities in a way that Thoreau does not, lending her work a uniquely feminine perspective, although she is interested in men and their activities as well. Her writing and her art bring together all the elements of life in the wild, if Thoreau would allow that the presence of man, woman, and child does not tarnish that concept. In that sense Emma's writings are an extension of and a complement to Thoreau's work, as is Emma's life story in general.

Today Emma's book is recognized as a classic of Southern Appalachia, but it received little attention in 1905. Not all of the 500 copies sold, and the publisher returned the unsold copies to Emma. Some of these she illustrated with her own watercolors, selling them for five dollars. Thoreau was also less than successful with the publication of his first book, *A Week on the Concord and the Merrimac Rivers* (1849), storing 700 unsold copies in his attic.

Although Emma, like Thoreau, had begun her writing career as a poet, and had published a non-fiction book, she also began writing short stories, the first of which appeared in *Harper's* in December of 1908. Despite the birth of her fifth child in March, 1909, the family's short-lived residence in Miami, Florida, taken in an attempt to improve Emma's health, and a subsequent move to the Cumberland Gap in southeastern Kentucky where Emma was diagnosed with tuberculosis, Emma continued to produce artwork, poems, and stories as well as a book about the birds at Walden's Ridge.[16] Emma became excited over her self-published collection of poems, entitled "Chords from a Dulcimore." But her health continued to decline and she finally admitted to Miss Ricketson, in a letter of November, 1912, that things were "going from bad to worse."[17] When she lost her youngest child, Mark, to strep throat, she suffered the greatest sorrow of her life, and began to feel that her children were paying the price of the life she had chosen.

Consequently she left the mountain for a job that would support her family. Emma took an apartment in Chattanooga where she began, in April of 1914, to write a column entitled "Fountain Square



Conversations" for the Chattanooga *News.* Her format was a series of conversations between the iron fireman atop the fountain and the birds lighting on the basin's rim. Through it Emma spoke on a wide range of subjects that revealed the remarkable breadth and depth of her ideas, which were startlingly ahead of their time. In these conversations she is revealed as an environmentalist, a feminist, a philosopher, and a naturalist of first rank. She also wrote a feature series that is unsigned but easily identifiable as her work. One of these articles, "In the Spring Hollow," is an example of her striking descriptive writing:

> All is hushed in a dream-like coolness and quiet, bathed in a lustrous gloom; the dancing, hair-legged insects and their thin twanging murmur; the gray maple torsos, smooth-skinned, muscled and erect; transparencies of leafage and fairy ferns, dim against the faded last year's leaves; toadstools, cream and fawn and coral-tinged; faint blue and foam-white flowers of the shadow; pale stems leaning across each other in a pallor like that beneath the cold, bluish water of the spring. The green gloom is shot through with green fire only where one sunbeam slips to the freckled sand. Graygreen is the moss; gray are the lichened stones.[18]

In her descriptions, she followed in the path of Thoreau, who had deliberately set out to master the articultion of landscape. In May, 1853, he made this entry in his journal:

> He is the richest who has most use for nature as raw material of tropes and symbols with which to describe his life. If these gates of golden willows affect me, they correspond to the beauty and promise of some experience on which I am entering. If I am overflowing with life, am rich in experience for which I lack expression, then nature will be my language full of poetry.[19]

His guide in this effort was the Reverend William Gilpin (1724-1804), celebrated for his championship of the picturesque and his ability to verbalize landscape.[20]

Emma's aesthetic response to nature was expressed not only in "language full of poetry" but also in the images she sketched and painted in delicate watercolors and occasionally in oils. In this she surpassed Thoreau, who was not himself an artist, despite small sketches in his journal. Thoreau cultivated a sensitivity to the art of the natural scene. He was strongly influenced by John Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing,* which he had read by late November, 1857, and which produced in Thoreau an increased attention to shape and color. Thoreau biographer Robert D Richardson, Jr. attributes to Thoreau's reading of Ruskin much of the brilliance in "Autumnal Tints," which he characterizes as "one of Thoreau's great essays; it is his essay on perception."[21]

Thoreau's status as a college-educated man in New England allowed him to cultivate his intellectual and aesthetic sensibilities with relative ease. His classical studies at Harvard initiated his life-long interest in Greek and Roman authors and deepened his insight into natural philosophy. Harvard's library, as well as the public and private libraries in his community, provided a source of books not easily obtainable elsewhere. Finally, his peers were in the forefront of American intellectual life—Emerson, Hawthorne, Alcott, and Whitman. Emma, by contrast, was hampered by lack of advanced or university training; paucity of materials; her sex, few advantages then being available to women; and no peers on her intellectual level.

As naturalists, both were self-taught, learning from direct contact with nature. Both began as poets, and their mutual facility and fascination with language enhanced their strong descriptive writing (strengthened additionally, in Emma's case, by art studies). Both used their journals as a resource for their published writing, although Emma was more inclined to use hers as a personal record. Emma ventured into more areas, but Thoreau had a deeper, more lasting effect. He was the more powerful thinker, but one might say that she, in attempting to live out the implications of his thought, had more practical experience.

Finally, both had large ambitions. Thoreau's goal, like that of Blake and Whitman, was to write a "wisdom book." He was fascinated by *The Laws of Menu,* a Hindu wisdom book which corroborated his own "interest in austerity, withdrawal, and purification."[22] Transmigration he saw as another way of explaining metamorphosis or change in the natural world. He agreed with the Hindu concept of God, in which all nature both visible and invisible exists in the Divine Spirit, and where man participates in the divine. "Who is writing better Vedas?" Thoreau asked rhetorically in his journal, as he compared his times with the past. *Walden* is his Veda, or "wisdom book." Emma, too, wrote her own wisdom book, which is lost and likely to remain so. It was a book about spiritual nature, which she entitled " The Good Gray Mother." Her concept of nature as the earth mother is a strong feminine expression noticeably absent in Thoreau, and is one of their key differences.

Near her death, Emma lay wasted by the tuberculosis which had gradually weakened her until she became bedridden. She was nonetheless filled with anticipation about the life she might encounter after her death. She hoped and expected to meet people whose company she had enjoyed only through books—Lafacadio Hearn, Longfellow, Thoreau, and Robert Louis Stevenson. She wished she could just walk through the woods until she dropped. Free of her body, she could walk "over the waves of the sea, and in palm groves, and through the firs of Norway and the eucalyptus and fern forest of Australia" until she had seen "all the woods in the world."[23] She worked to the last on her bird book, which was finally published only a week or two before her death on March 19, 1919.

Thoreau's friend Theo Brown noted that he, too, was "in an exalted state of mind for a long time before his death."[24] He, like Emma, had determined to make the best of what was given him, and dictated to the last. He, too, was thinking of travel. Richardson writes:

> Early in the morning of May 6, Sophia read him a piece from the "Thursday" section of *A Week,* and Thoreau anticipated with relish the "Friday" trip homeward, murmuring "Now comes good sailing." In his last sentence, only the two words "moose" and "Indian" were audible.[25]

Emma deliberately chose Thoreau as a mentor and guide in her writing and in her path through life.As in the case of Kate Brady, he would not have presumed to encourage or discourage her; but surely he would have applauded her success "in spite of all ordinary discouragements." Each died relatively young—she was thirty-nine years old when she died, and Thoreau was forty-four.



Emma's circumstances, the realities of her life, affected her reading of Thoreau in several ways. When she first encountered his work, she was in an urban environment far from the woods she loved; his message only confirmed her own homesickness for the wild. The sheltered nature of her childhood and a fragmentary education obtained through independent reading and nature study rendered her completely open to communication with Thoreau, even though he was removed from her in space and time. As a lover of nature, an idealist, a romantic, and highly intelligent, she was receptive to the lessons of *Walden.*

While their views of the natural world and of human nature coincide, Emma was inclined to personify nature and emphasize its nurturing qualities, as demonstrated by her concept of the Good Gray Mother. Both viewed nature as hospitable, appealing, and endlessly fascinating, but Thoreau was especially responsive to the power, majesty, and danger in the wild. Thoreau was important, indeed essential, to the literary and artistic vision of Emma Bell Miles, but it can also be said that her vision sheds new light on the implications of Thoreau's life and thought.

[1]Emma Bell Miles, "After Reading Thoreau," *Century* 72 (October 1906), 855.

[2]Robert D. Richardson, Jr., *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986; 6th paperback printing, 1998), 328.

[3]Emma Bell Miles to Anna Ricketson, 20 February 1907, Ricketson Letters, Chattanooga Hamilton County Bicentennial Library (CHCBL). This collection does not include Miss Ricketson's side of the correspondence, but one can make inferences about it from the letters written by Miles. The collection was donated to the library by Miss Ricketson's niece, Edith Guerrier.

[4]Miles to Ricketson, 9 March 1907, Ricketson Letters, CHCBL.

[5]Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (NY: Carlton House, n.d.), 89.

[6]*Daniel Ricketson and His Friends,* ed. Anna and Walton Ricketson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1902), 19.

[7]*The Journals of Henry David Thoreau,* ed. Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen (1906; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1962), IX: 335-336. This is the entry for 23 April 1857.

[8]Ibid., 337. See also Walter Harding, "Thoreau and Kate Brady," *American Literature* 36 (1964): 347-349, cited in Richardson, *Henry Thoreau,* 351, 436, n. 12.

[9]Kay Baker Gaston, *Emma Bell Miles* (Signal Mountain, TN: Walden's Ridge Historical Association, 1986), 14.

[10]*Henry David Thoreau and Other Writings,* ed. Joseph Wood Krutch (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), excerpted from *Maine Woods,* 401.

[11]As reported by Edward Waldo Emerson, *Henry Thoreau As Remembered by a Young Friend* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917; reprint, 1968), 107.

[12]Thoreau, *Walden*, 81.

[13]Richardson, *Henry Thoreau*, 171.

[14]J. Lyndon Shanley, *The Making of Walden, with the Text of the First Version* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 129.

[15]Emma Bell Miles, *The Spirit of the Mountains* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 17-18.

[16]Miles to Ricketson, 16 May 1909, Ricketson Letters, CHCBL.

[17]Miles to Ricketson, Thanksgiving Day, 1912 (n.d.), Ricketson Letters, CHCBL.

[18][Emma Bell Miles], "In the Spring Hollow," Chattanooga *News*, 26 June 1914.

[19]*The Journals of Henry David Thoreau*, V: 135. This entry is for May 10, 1853.

[20]Richardson, *Henry Thoreau*, 261.

[21]Ibid., 361.

[22]Ibid., 109.

[23]Emma Bell Miles Journals, 16 July 1918. Jean Miles Catino Collection, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Lupton Library Special Collections.

[24]Richardson, *Henry Thoreau*, 388.

[25]Ibid., 389.



# Rereading *All the King's Men*

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Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men* permeates twentieth-century popular consciousness. Since its publication in 1946, many readers have assumed that Warren based his depiction of Willie Stark on Louisiana governor Huey Long. This perceived connection between *All the King's Men* and contemporary politics and Broderick Crawford's Oscar-winning performance as Willie Stark in the 1949 film version helped to popularize the novel. More recently the novel continues to influence popular thinking about politics. *All the King's Men* is clearly alluded to in *All the President's Men* and functions in the background of *Primary Colors* and George Stephanopolous's "UnBurdening Memoir," *All Too Human: A Political Education*. William Bedford Clark acknowledges the novel as a "perennial success, measured in dollars as well as dissertations" (1). And in the controversial Modern Library rankings of the century's novels—in which *Ulysses* is first and *The Great Gatsby* second—*All the King's Men* is ranked thirty-sixth.

> Joseph Blotner, in the Foreword to the novel's fiftieth anniversary edition, accounts for its impact: Functioning at the interface between art, history, and social science, combining the action of a novel with the sensibility of poetry, *All the King's Men* possesses relevance that transcends its century and any arbitrary political classification. . . . With its narrative power and the versatility of its prose, its depiction of a complex world, *All the King's Men* promises to remain one of the major novels in American literature. (x)

Robert S. Koppelman adds an interesting dimension to discussion of the novel's endurance by declaring *All the King's Men* so "multidimensional" that "rereading seems crucial to our experience of it" (24).

This discussion focuses on reasons for and results of rereading a novel enduring not just in dollars but in dissertations and on identifying its transcendent power. Such discussion requires examination of the processes of reading and rereading and why rereading becomes crucial to experiencing the novel. In a discussion of the act of reading poetry, Warren calls it "a sovereign antidote for passivity" which "demands participation" and constitutes an "imaginative enactment that stirs the deepest recesses where life-will and values reside," "an adventure in the celebration of life" (qtd. in Koppleman, 16-17). Kentucky writer Barbara Kingsolver offers a similarly interactive description of reading fiction:

> Literature is a collaborative act—especially fiction—more than any other art form I can think of. When I've written a book, it's half done. When a reader takes it, reads it, forms the pictures in his or her mind and has an emotional response to it, that's the moment of art. That's when it's finished. (Lit Chat 2)

But is the reading finished for the reader? What about subsequent readings? Are the pictures formed and the emotional responses the same as with the first reading?

In his essay "Observations on Rereading," David Galef offers reasons for rereading and questions about doing so. Chief among the questions is whether "rereading is impossible, at least in the sense of the same reader picking up the same text for the second time" (24). I first read *All the King's Men* as a high school junior following an assignment, next as a college junior doing the same, then as a reading project two summers ago, and most recently as a literary critic preparing this paper. My motives, experience, knowledge, values, and expectations were indeed different, in degrees, for each reading. The values and concerns of the times in which the readings occurred—1968, 1972, and 1998-99—also differed. With each rereading I encountered not just the repeated text, but the remembered experience of earlier reading. As Galef puts it, "If art preserves life, rereading enables the impossible, time travel—not just an excursion to the world and era of the text, but a near repetition of the reader's experience of other readings" (25).

Galef identifies other reasons for rereading: as a necessary function of literary criticism; to get plot out of the way and obvious questions answered, so to uncover meaning, insights, and connections missed on the first reading; to appreciate the poetic use of language, sound devices, metaphor, or rhythms not noticed in the anticipation of "what happens next"; to find comfort and stability, as with formulaic fiction or children's desire to have a story read over and over; simply for pleasure, the obvious appeal of repeating something we enjoyed the first time. All these motives can combine, just as we assimilate the changes in ourselves and in the events around us each time we read. Galef also reminds that pleasure is not essential to rereading, as anyone who does so just for an assignment or to prepare for a class recognizes.

The reason for my 1998 rereading was a direct experience with politics and a subsequent curiosity as to whether *All the King's Men* could still be the entertaining yet compelling novel I remembered. I certainly found pleasure in the reading, discovering much I had forgotten, responding from a mature perspective but revisiting earlier readings and reactions. Another prompt was the Modern Library ranking, the thirty-sixth place seeming oddly appropriate for a novel carrying the "dollars and dissertations" success of popular and critical acclaim.

One of my first rereading experiences was the one that Galef identifies as "time travel"—I was delighted in the ways the novel is and is not dated. Jack Burden's cynical commentary remains amazingly current. Jack's "I had hit him where he lived"; "I had fire in my belly"; and "I had sure God brought off that scene" still echo in our culture. With little exception Warren exhibits an unerring ear for American speech that has remained at the core of our contemporary casual language—words like "sap," for example, or like Sadie's stricken reaction to Willie's infidelities: "He's got to come back, do you hear? He's got to. Because he can't do without me. And he knows it. He can do without any of those sluts, but he can't do without me. Not without Sadie Burke, and he knows it" (144).

I did take note, of course, of the rare exception, such as Jack's lashing out at a police officer for failing to recognize him: "You damned well better find out next time. . . before you get gay" (250). Moreover, at this point in time, when we've heard the Nixon tapes and much worse, Willie and Jack seem extremely



forbearing in that their worst expletives, even under the most extreme pressures, are "damn" and "goddam." In its totality though, the novel still resonates with the twentieth-century American English of the streets, television, fiction, and film.

In another sense, however, *All the King's Men* entertains and arrests today because much of it does allow travel to another era. Today's reader encounters a vanished South before air conditioning, where heat and sweat function as characters; where Jack must get a fan from the desk when he checks into a hotel; and where driving, even on the modern concrete slab of a highway, is an experience of hot wind and impossible conversation. Further, although Willie's obsession with speed, with being driven as rapidly as possible over the new roads he has provided, is recognizably contemporary, the isolation, poverty, and starkness of the towns and farms he visits have for the most part disappeared or significantly diminished. Of course one also travels back to simple courtesies and expected kindnesses that reverberate in memory, as Jack observes on his last visit to Lucy Stark: "That is what they give you in the country in a little white house like that when you make a visit, iced tea and devil's food cake" (424).

On the other hand, although contemporary political campaigns are carried out through media to which Willie had no access, the manipulation, the revivalistic tone, and what has now become the sound byte remain at the core of campaigning. Willie and contemporary politicians, were they to meet through the time travel of fiction, would have no problem recognizing each other, especially if they were from the South. Indeed the courthouse visits and small town speeches, the images of humble beginnings and family photographs, remain at the center of many campaigns. While political pundits lamented the public's refusal to reject a contemporary Willie for his sexual behavior, Warren offered a cogent explanation fifty-three years ago. Commenting on Willie Stark's continuing to be photographed as a family man well after his real behavior was widely known, Jack explains:

> Yes, those pictures were an asset to the Boss. Half the people in the state knew that the Boss had been tom-catting around for years, but the pictures of the family gave the voters a nice warm glow, it made them feel solid, substantial, and virtuous. . . . It only meant that the Boss was having it both ways, and that seemed a mark of the chosen and superior. (328)

Jack also understands the limits of this complicity between politician and voters: divorce "would have been very different, and would have robbed the voter of something he valued, the nice warm glow of complacency, the picture that flattered him and his own fat or thin wife standing in front of the henhouse" (328).

Galef's essay points out that "in the course of time or through new cultural assumptions, revisionary interpretation occurs" (19). Global and national politics have changed in many directions since the publication of *All the King's Men*, one alteration being that the threat of dictatorship under leaders like Huey Long no longer looms as it seemed to when the novel was written. In my 1998 and 1999 readings, newly reminded that Warren was never comfortable with a direct correspondence between Willie Stark and Huey Long, I began to consider other possible role models or bases for a composite character. With

Blotner's 1997 Warren biography providing helpful dates, I realized that Kentucky's Governor A. B. "Happy" Chandler could have been at least a partial model for Willie.

Both Long and Chandler were "boy governors," Long elected at thirty-five and Chandler at thirty-seven. Chandler became governor in 1935; the year of Long's assassination, and Warren had been living in Nashville during Chandler's rise to power and would have been able to closely follow his campaign. Chandler lost a hard-fought Senate campaign to Alben Barkley in 1938, the year Warren began writing *All the King's Men*. And Chandler won a full term as Senator in 1942, the year Warren left Louisiana.

Personal similarities also exist. Lowell Harrison and James Klotter describe Chandler's campaign style: "Wearing white suits, singing songs . . . hugging voters, kissing babies, Chandler dominated a gathering with his formidable personality. . . . [H]e conducted assemblies like revival meetings, making asides to people in the crowd he would call by name (368). Harrison and Klotter further detect the "hard, determined soul" underneath Chandler's antics and quote a newspaperman of the era as saying that "by methods he probably doesn't understand himself he has become 'one of them' that is, one of the crowd itself" (368).

Like Long, Chandler engineered laws giving the governor more power; both men wanted to extend their influence into the arena of the United States Senate. Such parallels at least establish that Willie Stark may be a composite of several increasingly demagogic southern leaders of the time, whose tactics Warren had observed or heard about from family and friends.

In addition to insights gained by attention to the time travel dimension of rereading, my later encounters with *All the King's Men* did allow me to make connections I had missed in earlier readings. Discussions abound about Jack's determined estrangement from his mother and his complicity in Judge Irwin's death. But I now began to pay closer attention to the damage done to Jack by the three adults who constitute his family: his mother, Judge Irwin, and Ellis Burden. This parental triangle caused Jack to grow up as a child among adult whispers that ceased when he entered a room. Jack in fact recalls this experience as a living memory, a "vague sense, rising from the depth of time, and of myself" (193). By concealing Jack's true identity, the three adults shaped a false one, themselves guilty of believing that an untold secret can have no effect, that their sexual realities would not be suspected and whispered about. When Jack visits the man he then believes to be his biological father, whom he sarcastically labels The Scholarly Attorney, he calls him "Father" twice, then thinks "*Oh, father, father*" in a lament—and in yearning—for his childhood relationship with this man who has now abandoned him. Then the cynical Jack whom the secrets have helped to shape says, "But I had come a long way, too..." and answers Ellis Burden's response with "Oh, nothing" (200-01).

Jack's search for truth necessitates a rereading of his past and leads to an understanding of Cass Mastern's discovery that "the world is all of a piece." For Warren this means that man is "in the world with



continual and intimate interpenetration, and inevitable osmosis of being, which in the end does not deny, but affirms, his identity" (qtd. in Strandberg 246). For Warren, this interpenetration was intimately connected to the act of reading: "The story promises us a resolution, and we wait in suspense to learn how things will come out. We are in suspense, not only about what will happen, but even more about what the event will mean" (qtd. in Koppleman 33).

What, then, of rereading, of which Galef says, "suspense disappears after the initial reading"? How does Warren's statement connect with Koppleman's assertion that rereading is crucial to our experience of *All the King's Men*? The answer begins in Warren's assertion that readers are in suspense not just about plot but about meaning. Once we know what happens, we have to determine what it means, and we do that best through rereading and rethinking the events of the novel without suspense regarding the end.

Here the novel's transcendence of its time and politics connects directly with Warren's success with both critical and popular audiences. Unlike many of his Modernist contemporaries, Warren did not seek escape from the modern world. Koppleman has called him "that rare figure who looked the twentieth century dead in the eye and did not blink" (qtd. in Strandberg (246). Again, Warren's comment about suspense is pertinent. He concludes, "We are in suspense about the story in fiction because we are in suspense about another story far closer and more important to us—the story of our own life as we live it. . . . [We] turn to fiction for some slight hint about the story in the life we live" (qtd. in Koppleman 33).

If suspense derives from our search for meaning in the novel, and the meaning of our own lives, then rereadings can be increasingly rewarding as they replace, in Galef's terms, suspense focused on plot with anticipation of self-discovery. Here the nature of Warren's central character becomes crucial in that Jack Burden shares virtually all characteristics of the modern detective of twentieth-century popular fiction. In *Mystery Fiction and Modern Life,* R. Gordon Kelly explains that mystery fiction—by which he really means the American detective novel—flourishes because it models ways of coping with stress in modernity, wherein people are interdependent upon strangers to an unprecedented degree. This enforced dependence demands "an assessment of the real motives and intentions of others" (18). And, most significantly, Kelly explains, "The detective is perforce a historian of sorts, and the historian something of a detective"(29)—an apt description of Jack Burden's dual role in *All the King's Men.*

Jack shares above all else the cool cynicism of the detective, the detachment from emotion and events that presumably enables his assessment of motive and truth. Kelly's description of a Ross MacDonald detective could just as readily describe Jack:

> The outcomes of his interviews, the nature of the meanings that emerge in and through his consciousness, the substance of his investigations, consist finally in the connections he makes—between past and present, or the living and the dead, for example, that have been rendered invisible by lies and deception. (70)

Kelly explains that to get to the truth among the competing motives and stories of strangers, the detective must possess "skills of emotional management—dispassionateness, the ability to concentrate, to remain self-possessed in the face of stress" (196). This describes the "cool unflappability" that distinguishes the detective and which "has near-universal application in modern society" (5).

This cool loner, however, whose "pragmatic wariness" is "appropriate to the public sphere, "is . . . dysfunctional in the world of intimate human relationships" (25). As a historian-detective, Jack Burden uses his skills as researcher and detached interviewer to further the agenda of The Boss, to recover Cass Mastern's story, and to discover the "something" that would ruin the Judge. But as a narrator, Jack is in a sense rereading his own life, commenting in third person on a younger Jack Burden's smug self-assurance in his search for the truth. And as re-readers we see along with him the meanings he misses and the connections—"between past and present, or the living and the dead"—he fails to make and how these missed connections affect his understanding of himself and others. He has to reread lives—his mother's, The Scholarly Attorney's, the Judge's, Anne Stanton's, and his own—and reinterpret motives and actions. Only then can he accept "the awful responsibility of Time."

Jack and Anne reach the understanding that "if you could accept the past you might hope for the future, for only out of the past can you make the future" (435). As detective-historian, Jack has discovered the truth of his past. As a human being embracing his humanity, he accepts his past and thus has reason for hope. When the pieces of events are put together as in a puzzle, Jack learns that "reality is not a function of the event as event but of the relationship of that event to past, and future, events" and that life and identity are dependent on our grasping the principle that "direction is all" (384).

As we reread this novel where the past (ours and the novel's) is always in the present creating an as yet unknowable future, where stories lie within stories, where the narrator comments in third person on his former unflappable self, Warren exposes slowly Cass Mastern's realization that "Nothing is ever lost" (183). As re-readers we know the result of Jack's cool quest for the truth, and this knowledge prompts our own examination of detachment from people and events—whether in our lives or in literature. Ross MacDonald has said that "the surprise with which a detective novel concludes should set up tragic reverberations which run backward throughout the entire structure" (qtd. in Kelly 64). Just as Jack's detached narrative voice is balanced against our awareness of his eventual reconnection with people and past, the surprises of our first reading of *All the King's Men* are known and therefore woven into all points of subsequent readings, Jack's discovery that identity depends on interpenetrating people and events past and present in turn encourages our own discovery: That we may know life from only the thin filament of the web on which we stand but our actions reverberate throughout the web; endings are beginnings; and we have within us the stuff of the hero and the villain. The novel opens with a quotation from Dante: "For as long as hope retaineth ought of green." Jack Burden and Anne Stanton can hope for the future because they have absorbed and accepted the past, and we can do the same, absorbing the younger selves who first encountered the novel as a mystery complete with surprise ending. We recognize too Warren's sense of responsibility for embracing the



"osmosis" essential to identity in writing a novel embracing a wide audience, narrated in a hard-boiled voice familiar to casual readers and film-goers.

The Modern Library's first-ranked *Ulysses* can never reach and never wanted such an audience, and second ranked *The Great Gatsby* teaches that one must blink in the face of this century. Warren, whose novel is ranked number thirty-six, chooses another approach: one that enfolds narrator and reader, past and present, fear and hope. As detectives of the meanings of our own lives—our pasts and presents as they construct our futures—we indeed find rereading crucial to our experience of this enduring novel.

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# "What are you going to do *now*?": Stranded in Immediacy in Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country*

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Late in Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country* (1985) Emmett Smith, a Vietnam veteran, tells his niece, Samantha Hughes, "You can't learn from the past. The main thing you learn from history is that you can't learn from history. That's what history *is*" (226). As a direct consequence of this philosophy, Mason's characters—with no past to rely upon and, too frequently, no future to anticipate—find themselves trapped in a perpetual present. To better assume this shrugging off of both past and future, Mason chooses to abandon the archetypes of traditional Southern literature. For most of her characters, then, there is no prevailing sense of heritage, of community, of family; in essence, nothing is important beyond the single moment. Kathryn McKee, in her article on *Feather Crowns* (1993), notes that Mason's minimal characterizations create figures "who know themselves and their family histories no more intimately than we finally do" (35). This reduction of character, in some part, is the by-product of Mason's minimalism, that 1980s movement wryly defined by Fred Hobson as ". . . a fiction that focuses on everyday concerns of rather average people with no great sense of self, a fiction that presents, rather drily and matter-of-factly, a slice of often depressing life. . . ." (12). The movement itself demands that characters have no past, no future, condemned—as in the fiction of such writers as Raymond Carver, Jayne Anne Phillips, Richard Ford, and Tobias Wolff —as are Emmett and Samantha, to drift endlessly in a specific instant, stranded in the immediate.

With *In Country*, Mason's first novel, this sense of immediacy is achieved in two ways. First, the overwhelming presence of popular culture establishes the novel in an immediate present, a perpetual now, a world whose boundaries are, as Hobson notes, "the twenty-three inches of a television screen or the parking lot of one's nearest mall" (11). As it is for every reader of the novel, for the characters, also, there is a sense that it has always been and forever will be the summer of 1984. Second, Mason emphasizes immediacy through the absence of the past. Whether through denial (as in Emmett's case) or through ignorance (as in Sam's), the past is not a tangible, shaping force; rather, it is something that dissipates as soon as the present is achieved.

Though much of contemporary literature's immersion in pop culture has been ridiculed as K-Mart Realism or, more derisively in the South, as Grit Lit, Mason fiercely defends her use of pop icons:

> I think [popular culture is] very close to people and it reflects what they feel and believe. Certain people denigrate it because it's not high art, but I don't happen to feel that way. I don't want to have an elitist attitude about the culture. It's very real, it means something to a whole lot of people, and I can't ignore that. People have a lot of affection for these images on the screen, names of songs, things that are a familiar part of their lives. (Smith 425)



Popular culture, as Mason sees it, is an essential source of identity for her characters. Pop icons, those familiar trappings of middle-class America, shape their world as well as their perceptions of their past and future. Their personal identities, in fact, are shaped as much by celebrities and fads as they are by their own families and communities. The lives Sam watches on television and hears through radio *are* her family. She, for example, sees the death of Colonel Blake on *M*A*S*H* as being "more real to her than the death of her own father" (25). As Leslie White points out, pop culture is a "means of continuity and communication" (79) in these people's lives. It is not that they have trouble differentiating between what is real and what is imitation; rather, it is that they *prefer* to seek meaning through the elements ubiquitous in their immediate world. Understandably, the false reality frequently presented by pop culture is more real and more appealing than their own aimless lives.

In fact, characters are so inundated with pop images that they become perpetual reference points. Sam and Emmett, for instance, constantly compare real-life situations to the pop elements of their world: Sam sees their trip to the Vietnam War Memorial as similar to the movie *National Lampoon's Vacation* (4); Emmett reminds Sam of James Stewart in *Harvey* (50); Emmett lifts a rock the "size of a boom box" (66); Tom, another vet, looks like Bruce Springsteen (81). Sam's favorite pop cultural touchstone, though, is the television series *M*A*S*H*: Emmett tells her that Frank Burns was just like his commanding officer in Vietnam (25, 102); Emmett reminds her of both Hawkeye (222) and Radar (50); she notices that Tom is as tall as Colonel Blake (117). *M*A*S*H* is especially appropriate not only because of its irreverent attitude toward war, but also because of its recurring motif of characters who suffer from psychic trauma caused by the war. For example, Sam recalls the final episode in which Hawkeye suffers a breakdown when he witnesses a mother smothering her crying child in order to prevent their discovery by enemy soldiers. Though solutions to these traumas are never simple in real life, Sam does perceive that Emmett must confront (as Hawkeye does) the mental demons of Vietnam in order to release himself.

Eventually, though, Sam realizes that life is *not* like television. At the end of the novel, Emmett finally allows the horrors of his experience in the war to emerge; he tells Sam of lying for hours in a field of dead bodies, surrounded by "the smell of warm blood in the jungle heat. . . ." (223). When Sam replies, "That sounds familiar. I saw something like that in a movie on TV," Emmett sharply tells her, "This was completely different. It really happened" (223). Obviously, then, popular culture—a familiar which these characters frequently trust without question—can be an impediment to understanding the real world. Still, as Mason adeptly perceives, these cultural icons are the mythology of contemporary society; for Sam, they are the necessary connections between past, present, and future.

Rock and roll, a favorite touchstone for Sam, is a perfect example of one of these pop culture links. Not only is she comforted by the songs of her own generation, but pop music also helps Sam relate to the past, especially to the Sixties of Vietnam. As it was for the soldiers of Vietnam, music is for Sam "a real connection [to the World]" (111).

Sam especially finds sustenance in the music of Bruce Springsteen, one of the predominant rock and roll artists of the 1980s. Springsteen, like *M*A*S*H,* is ubiquitous in Sam's life; she believes his music is key to much of what she doesn't understand about Vietnam, about life, about herself: "Somehow there was a secret knowledge in his songs, as though he knew exactly what she was feeling" (138). The song "Born in the U.S.A., " which depicts a vet's frustration after the war (in dealing with his brother's death in Vietnam as well as his inability to get a job in the country for which he fought), serves as a fitting parallel to Emmett's own personal war demons (his possible affliction by Agent Orange and his attempt to remain whole after his tour of duty). The epigraph for the novel, two lines from Springsteen's song ("I'm ten years burning down the road/Nowhere to run ain't got nowhere to go"), captures the empty present and bleak future which Emmett and countless other Vietnam vets are forced to struggle with on an everyday basis. It is befitting, then, that Sam confronts the past and her father's name on the Vietnam War Memorial with Springsteen's *Born in the U.S.A.* album in her hands. Leslie White dismisses the act, saying that it "is no more significant than opening a can of Pepsi" (70); however, Marjorie Winther contends that Sam's action has far greater import:

> Clutching the album in which Springsteen so accurately voices Sam's concerns and attitudes about the aftermath of the war allows Sam to transcend her individual catharsis. By holding onto Springsteen, Sam joins a larger social movement. Unlike opening a can of Pepsi, . . . Sam brings the spirit of an angry counterculture, which questions American values and history. (196)

The truth is more likely between these poles, more than happenstance but hardly a revolutionary gesture either; nonetheless, innocent as the occurrence may be, it creates a poignant moment, one that reverberates meaningfully at the novel's end.

Though these images of popular culture may tend to impair Mason's characters' vision of the world, they nonetheless are appropriate expressions for the immediacy of American culture. Characters like Emmett and Sam bear witness to the changing world, to the changing South, a region losing its edge, its distinction to modernization, to urbanization, to Wal-Mart and the Big Mac. They are representatives of a South steeped less in Southern culture and more in television, movies, and rock-n-roll.

One consequence of a dependence upon popular culture is that the past vanishes as quickly as the current fashion or fad: pop icons become passe; the past, (faulty) memory. Unlike traditional Southern writers, Mason creates characters who ignore or are oblivious to the importance of the past. It is simply not an influence within their lives. Sam and Emmett, though, are hardly to blame, for as Fred Hobson points out, they are "products of a *society* that disregards history" (18). Trapped in a culture that values only the immediate, the past—like the center—cannot possibly hold. Like so many contemporary Southerners—both literary and real—they have abandoned the conventions of the mythopoeic South, preferring instead a more tangible, *realer* South: one of discount chains and fast food.

Sam, nonetheless, at least for a while, finds herself obsessed with the past, specifically, with discovering the meaning of the Vietnam War and the reasons for its devastating effects on those around her.



Though in a distant past, Vietnam has irrevocably touched her life: she never knows her father; Emmett, her closest companion and ally, has suffered both psychologically and physically; and Tom, an infatuation (and possible future), has been made impotent. She knows little of the war, except that "Emmett came back . . . , but [her] father [Dwayne] did not" (23). In her search for meaning, Sam discovers nothing but darkness and secrecy; when she asks her mother about her past and Vietnam, for example, Irene tells her, "It was all such a stupid waste. There's nothing to remember" (168).

Still, Sam persists, believing that her understanding of Vietnam will lead her to an understanding of Emmett's emotional scars and Dwayne's death, and, simultaneously, ease the emotional complexities of her own present. Not surprisingly, she finds herself denied access to the past again and again. Sam is chiefly concerned with learning about her father, killed in the war before she was born. In her present, Dwayne is nothing more than a "face in a picture" (64). His death—that "big secret" (78)—seems to hold answers—but answers to what she is never completely certain. Nonetheless, she feels compelled to appease her ignorance. Unfortunately, there is little information: Emmett did not know him well; her grandparents have apparently chosen to forget the unsavory aspects of Dwayne recorded in his war journal; and her mother, married to him less than a month before his death, admits that he was little more than a stranger to her. In her quest for answers, Sam convinces herself that an understanding of Vietnam and her father's death will allow her to live peacefully in her present of strange uncles, broken families, and uncertain futures. The war, though, is an ever-evolving ambiguity: most vets in the novel, like Emmett, want to forget it, but cannot erase the horror from their memories; others, like Pete, actually "preferred the war" (55) to their current lives.

Slowly, surely, Sam realizes the validity of what everyone has repeatedly told her: there is no choice but the present, the immediate. As Earl tells the other veterans at their dance, "You can't live in the past, and you can't drown yourself in memories. The question is, what are you going to do *now?*" (114). This realization is further affirmed when she reads her father's war diary. Reading the journal, she is frightened by this man, this *stranger*; she is appalled by "the way he talked about gooks and killing" (221). Later, Emmett explains that the past is perhaps best forgotten—or at least best left to the past. Coming as close as he will ever get to a breakthrough, Emmett says, "You can't do what we did and then be happy about it. . . . There ain't no way to tell [about Vietnam]. No point. You can't tell it all" (222). He then reveals to her the irreversible hopelessness of history, of the past: "You can't learn from the past. The main thing you learn from history is that you can't learn from history. That's what history *is*" (226).

Likewise, Sam's future holds little promise. Lonnie, her jobless boyfriend, pushes her toward marriage; Irene, her mother, urges her toward university. Neither proposition is appealing to Sam. Her future stands as empty before her as the blank sheet of paper handed to her at her high school graduation. Because their pasts are filled with pain and loss, their futures filled with emptiness and possible hopelessness, characters like Sam and Emmett must learn to persevere in the present. All that matters, Sam learns, is what you have right *now*: "Life," she realizes, "was here and now" (216). Only the immediate persists.

At novel's end, overlooking the Vietnam War Memorial, a "massive . . . black gash in a hillside" (239), with its endless parade of names, Sam ultimately realizes that "she will never really know what happened to all these men in the war" (240). This understanding, as simple and unassuming as it may seem, is for Sam an epiphany, a catharsis: "[She] doesn't understand what she is feeling, but it is something so strong, it is like a tornado moving in her, something massive and overpowering. It feels like giving birth to this wall" (240). With the past forever and at last understandably closed off to her, Sam is left to live her present, to revel in a lifetime of fad and fashion and pop culture, a world of immediacy.

Through *In Country*, Mason creates a brutally realistic portrait of contemporary America: a society that chooses to dismiss its past, enthusing, instead, in fifteen-minute fame and instant gratification. This is a society quite happy to be stranded in the here-and-now, bounded on all sides by an empty pop culture wasteland. The life of Samantha Hughes, then, is but a microcosm of the commercial landscape of our own everyday lives. Interestingly, Mason poses only as an observer; she offers no cultural critique. She states: I don't think fiction should be didactic. Larger themes may come out of it, but I don't want to underline that. I think I'm . . . shying away from large statements because I distrust them (Smith 424-25). In the end, then, it is the experience of everyday American life that Mason so beautifully captures in *In Country*, a society blissfully oblivious to any historical sense, a society that lives perpetually in the immediate—a world, she seems to say, that simply is.

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